



India 2023 (Quarter IV) At a Glance

SOCIAL	ECONOMY	POLITY
OCTOBER 2023		
Madhya Pradesh CM unveiled 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya on Mandhata mountain at Omkareshwar in MP & laid foundation stone of Advaita Lok	Govt extended export promotion scheme Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) for a period of nine months ending June 30, 2024	Law Commission will hold a meeting on Sep 27 to finalise its report on holding elections based on the idea of 'One Nation, One Election'
India's Jal Shakti minister announced 75% of Indian villages approximately 4.4 lakh, have achieved 'Open Defecation Free Plus' (ODF Plus) status, maintaining sanitation and waste management	Inclusion of Indian bonds in JPMorgan's widely tracked emerging market debt index could bring \$23 billion worth inflows into the country - Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman	ECI announced schedule for Legislative Assembly Elections in 5 states: Chhattisgarh & Mizoram on Nov 7, MP Nov 17, Rajasthan Nov 25, Telangana Nov 30, counting for all states on Dec 3
Bihar caste survey: OBCs, EBCs comprise more than 63% of State's population, 36% Extremely Backward Class, 27.13% OBC; 19.65% SC, 14% Yadavs, 3% Musahars & 3.65% Brahmins	India will remain the fastest-growing major economy in the world in 2023-24 fiscal on the back of strong domestic fundamentals and benign inflation expectations - A finance ministry report	Chhattisgarh Government granted habitat rights to its Baiga PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) right after Kamar PVTG received habitat rights in August 2023
Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recommends inclusion of QR codes on food products for accessibility by visually impaired individuals stating this will ensure access to safe food for all	India will aim to become a 'developed nation' by 2047 with an economy of \$30 trillion in its 100th year of independence - Niti Aayog chief executive officer B.V.R. Subrahmanyam	Bihar Assembly passed a bill to elevate reservation quotas in educational institutions & govt jobs for various communities, the effective reservation becomes 75%
NOVEMBER 2023		
People in Odisha celebrated Boita Bandana, a boat festival marking the maritime glory of the region; Celebrated annual observance takes place on Kartik Purnima	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in the current form for the next five years could necessitate a Budget outlay of Rs 11 trillion during the period in nominal terms- government	ECI develops in-house software named 'ENCORE' (Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment) designed for efficient candidate & election management

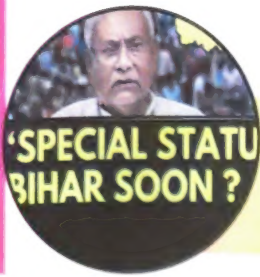
The Supreme Court emphasized a nationwide ban on barium and other prohibited chemicals in firecrackers, highlighting its commitment to public health and the environment	Retail inflation eased to a 4-month low of 4.87 % in Oct even as food inflation remained broadly static at 6.6%, data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO)	Voting for Madhya Pradesh's 230 assembly seats begins; Counting will take place on December 3, along with Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Rajasthan & Mizoram
The seventh Deepotsav in Ayodhya set a new world record by emerging as the largest event of lighting lamps together at one location, with over 22 lakh 'diyas' illuminated along the Saryu river	India should become a middle-income country and then push to make INR a hard currency, & till then, it must promote the settlement of global trade in the local currency - think tank GTRI	Second phase of assembly elections in Chhattisgarh takes place for remaining 70 seats of the 90-member assembly; first phase was held on November 7; counting on December 3
Union Minister for Consumer Affairs Piyush Goyal launched initiative to provide wheat flour to consumers under 'Bharat' brand at prices not exceeding ₹27.50 per kilogram	India's forex reserves increased by USD 5.077 billion to USD 595.397 billion during the week ended November 17 - RBI; in previous reporting week, kitty declined USD 462 million to USD 590.321 billion	Assembly elections in Rajasthan on 25 Nov to elect 200 members, results on 3 Dec; Assembly elections in Telangana on 30 Nov 2023 to elect 119 members; results on 3 Dec 2023
DECEMBER 2023		
Nine ministries gather to support MoRD's National Campaign against Gender-based Violence – 'Nayi Chetna 2.0'; it will deepen awareness on gender-based violence amongst SHG members	India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a higher-than-expected 7.6% in the July to September 2023 quarter, as per initial estimates from the National Statistical Office	BJP sweeps Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh; Congress ousts the BRS in Telangana; ZPM Wrests Power From MNF in Mizoram
The enchanting annual Raas Mahotsav has unfolded its divine festivities in Majuli, Assam, making it the perfect destination to immerse oneself in the bhakti (devotion) of Lord Krishna	Real GDP growth for the current year 2023-24 is projected at 7% – with Q3 at 6.5% and Q4 at 6%. Real GDP growth for Q1 of 2024-25 is projected at 6.7%, for Q2 at 6.5% and for Q3 at 6.4% - RBI	Congress leader A. Revanth Reddy takes oath as Telangana Chief Minister; BJP leader Bhajanlal Sharma to be the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan
The National Water Mission hosted 'Jal Itihas Utsav' in Delhi to raise awareness about safeguarding water heritage, instil ownership, and contribute to historical structure restoration	RBI left key policy rates unchanged for fifth time in a row; underlined that there is no room for complacency in the fight against inflation till prices fall to the 4 per cent target	Article 370 Verdict Highlights: SC upholds abrogation of special status of J&K, PM Modi calls judgment 'Beacon of Hope'
Panchayati Raj Ministry launched 'Gram Manchitra' GIS app, empowering Gram Panchayats for efficient grassroots spatial planning, fostering active participation in the process	Ministry of Food Processing reveals substantial growth in the sector, with beneficiaries of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme investing ₹7,126 crore; Cumulative sales reached ₹49,825 crore during Apr-Sep period	Mohan Yadav is new MP CM, Shivraj Singh Chouhan tenders his resignation; BJP picked Vishnu Deo Sai as new Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh



World 2023 (Quarter IV) At a Glance

SOCIAL	ECONOMY	POLITY
OCTOBER 2023		
Drew Weissman & Katalin Karikó jointly awarded 2023 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their groundbreaking contributions to the development of highly effective mRNA vaccines against Covid-19	In India, which accounts for the bulk of South Asia region, growth is expected to remain robust at 6.3 per cent in 2023-24 - India Development Update of the World Bank	Mohamed Muizzu won presidential election in Maldives after a second-round run-off against incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
Norwegian author Jon Fosse won this year's Nobel Prize in literature; the officials said that the award given to Fosse for "for his innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable."	China's economy grows 4.9% in Q3, beating expectations but slowing from previous quarter - official data show; But that was much slower than the 6.3% annual growth rate of the previous quarter	Hamas attacked Israel from the Gaza Strip on 7 October 2023, 859 civilians & 345 Israeli soldiers killed, around 200 Israeli civilians and soldiers were taken as hostages
The largest Hindu temple created by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham inaugurated in Robbinsville, New Jersey	India & China are projected to jointly contribute about half of world's growth in both 2023 and 2024 - IMF in its latest Regional Economic Outlook (Asia and Pacific) report	Kevin McCarthy became the shortest-tenured US House speaker in 147 years on Tuesday, ousted by Republican hardliners who toppled him with a rarely used manoeuvre
India has launched Operation Ajay, a dedicated initiative to facilitate the safe return of its citizens from Israel amidst the ongoing developments in the region	US emerges as India's biggest trading partner during April-September this fiscal; China at second - Govt Data; Imports declined to USD 21.39 billion during first 6 months of current fiscal	Turkey observed 100th anniversary of its modern, secular republic's creation, marking a historical milestone as a modern, secular state following the collapse of Ottoman Empire
NOVEMBER 2023		
Tech billionaire Elon Musk has predicted that artificial intelligence will eventually mean that no one will have to work - Elon Musk tells Rishi Sunak	The World Trade Organization's director-general warned that the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict will impact global growth if it spills over to the wider Middle East region	Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will begin a eight-day visit to India on Nov 3, expected to deliberate on various aspects of close India-Bhutan ties

A record 96,917 Indians were arrested while crossing illegally into the US between October 2022 and September 2023, according to the latest U.S. Customs and Border Protection (UCBP) data	Rupee depreciated 6 paise to close at an all-time low of 83.34 against US dollar; Rupee had hit its previous low of 83.30 on November 1	President Xi heads to US for 'meeting of great importance' with Biden amidst frosty bilateral ties; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit hosted by US in San Francisco
More than 3,600 Palestinian children were killed in the first 25 days of the war between Israel and Hamas, according to Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry	India & UK at the stage of discussing "complex issues" involving free trade agreement (FTA) including rules of origin, import duties on EVs, other automobiles and movement of professionals - A senior official	Pakistani government gives 1.7 million Afghans it says are living illegally in the country until November 1 to leave voluntarily or be forcibly removed
Scores of athletes have celebrated the opening of the Gay Games in Hong Kong despite opposition from anti-LGBTQ lawmakers, marking the first time the international sporting event to be held in Asia	India seeks deal with Brazil for pulses imports; This year India imported 2.13 million tonne (MT) of pulses – from Australia, Canada, Myanmar, Mozambique, Tanzania, Sudan and Malawi	UNSC adopted a resolution for "extended humanitarian pauses" in Gaza; Hamas & Israel extended 4-day truce by a further 2 days; 81 hostages & 180 Palestinian released under 4-day truce
DECEMBER 2023		
Former football sensation David Beckham recently wrapped up a three-day UNICEF tour in India, leaving an indelible mark with his visits to local communities and children's initiatives	Beijing and Riyadh are expanding their economic relationship as they seek to reduce reliance on the US and its allies	Javier Milei elected president of Argentina, defeating Sergio Massa, given the name "Chainsaw Man" symbolizing need to "cut through" govt bureaucracy & eliminate waste
Angkor Wat, located in the heart of Cambodia, has recently earned the prestigious title of the 8th wonder of the world, surpassing Italy's Pompeii	US economy added 199,000 jobs in Nov 2023, according to the latest report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	United Arab Emirates announced an offer to host the 28th session of Conference of Parties (COP 28) to the UNFCCC in Abu Dhabi in 2023
'Garba of Gujarat' has been inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO; the 15th ICH element from India to join this list	Govt permits Indian Rice Exporters Federation to ship 20 MT of non-basmati rice to earthquake-hit Nepal; though exports of non-basmati white rice were banned on July 20 to boost domestic supply	At the invitation of the President, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto will pay a State visit to India from 4-6 December, 2023
Kerala: Decentralised Waste Management Wins Recognition at COP 28, State aims for 'Zero Waste' Status in 2024, The COP28, held in Dubai from November 30 to December 12	Myanmar faces economic stagnation due to rising armed conflict; a dollar shortage hurting imports, Gross domestic product growth is forecast to weaken to 1% in fiscal year ending in March from 4% - World Bank	The U.N. General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to demand a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza in a strong demonstration of global support for ending the Israel-Hamas war



MIND MAP

Special Category Status (SCS)

Recently, the Bihar Cabinet has passed a resolution seeking the grant of Special Category Status (SCS) to Bihar.

A. What is Special Category Status (SCS)?

SCS is a classification developed by the Centre to aid the development of states that suffer geographical and socioeconomic challenges. SCS is not mentioned in the Constitution, and it was included on the proposals of the 5th Finance Commission in 1969.

C. Benefits

- 90% of all state expenditures for all centrally sponsored programs and outside assistance are covered by the central government, and the remaining 10% is given to the state as a zero-interest loan.
- For states in the general category, the typical loan-to-grant ratio is 70% loan and 30% grant.
- Receiving special consideration when applying for government funding.
- Reductions in excise taxes to draw enterprises to the state.
- States in the special category are given 30% of the total federal budget.
- These states have access to programs for debt reduction and debt exchange.

B. Criteria for Special Category States

- The state that is struggling with a resource shortage
- The low-income per capita
- State finances are not viable.
- Economic and structural underdevelopment
- The existence of a sizable tribe
- Hilly and challenging terrain
- Border regions those are strategically located
- A sparsely populated area

D. States with SCS

Eleven States including Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Uttarakhand and Telangana accorded the special category state status.

Special Category Status (SCS)

E. Why is Bihar Demanding Special Category Status (SCS)?

- Bihar is confronted with serious economic issues, including a lack of industrial growth.
- The state is dealing with natural disasters such as floods in the north and severe droughts in the south.
- Bihar has a high poverty rate, with a significant number of families living below the poverty line.
- Seeking SCS is also a way to secure major financial help from the central government.

F. Criteria fulfilled by Bihar

Although Bihar meets most of the criteria for the grant of SCS, it does not fulfil the requirement of hilly terrain and geographically difficult areas, which is considered to be the primary reason for difficulty in infrastructural development.



MIND MAP

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India

India's G20 presidency emphasized global health via the Delhi Declaration, promoting resilient, equitable, inclusive systems with a One Health approach. Priorities included pandemic readiness, infectious diseases surveillance, and combating Antimicrobial Resistance in National Action Plans

A. About AMR

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) develops when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites evolve and no longer respond to antibiotics, making infections more difficult to treat and raising the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death.

B. Causes of AMR

Misuse and overuse of antimicrobials, lack of clean water and sanitation, inadequate infection prevention and control and Lack of awareness.

C. Impact of AMR on India

- India has one of the highest rates of AMR in the world, with more than 60,000 new-borns dying each year from antibiotic-resistant infections.
- The emergence of AMR makes (tuberculosis, malaria, typhoid, cholera, and pneumonia) these diseases more difficult to treat effectively.

D. Steps taken by India

- In April 2017, India's NAP for AMR to increase awareness, strengthen surveillance, promote research, and improves infection prevention and control.
- The Delhi Declaration on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) was signed by the ministers of the concerned ministries in India.
- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has banned 40 inappropriate fixed dose combinations.
- Antibiotic Stewardship Program (AMSP) aims to control the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in hospital wards and ICUs.

E. Climate Change

BRICS members agreed to address the challenges posed by climate change while also ensuring a just, affordable and sustainable transition to a low-carbon and low-emission economy.

**Antimicrobial
Resistance
(AMR) in India**



MIND MAP

Nuclear Energy in India

India's first indigenously developed 700 MW nuclear power plant in Gujarat's Kakrapar has started operations at full capacity.

A. Status of India's Nuclear Energy

- Nuclear energy is the fifth-largest source of electricity for India which contributes about 3% of the total electricity generation in the country.
- India has over 22 nuclear reactors in 7 power plants across the country which produces 6780 MW of nuclear power.
- One reactor, Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3) has also been connected to the grid.

B. Need

- India has limited reserves of fossil fuels, and nuclear energy can help reduce the country's dependence on coal, oil, and gas imports.
- It doesn't produce direct greenhouse gas emissions during electricity generation.
- Estimates show that nuclear plants cost only 33-50% of a coal plant and 20-25% of a gas combined-cycle plant.

C. Challenges

- India has limited domestic resources of uranium, which is the fuel for nuclear reactors.
- The regulatory framework for the development of nuclear power in India is complex and has been criticised for being slow and bureaucratic.
- India is not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has faced international sanctions in the past for its nuclear weapons program.

Nuclear Energy in India

D. Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP-3)

Features

- KAPP-3 is the country's first 700 MWe unit and represents a substantial advancement in Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) technology.
- PHWRs use natural uranium as fuel and heavy water as a moderator.
- The new 700 MWe unit optimizes the PHWR design by addressing excess thermal margins, enhancing efficiency without significant design changes.

About

- The KAPP-3 is India's third indigenously developed 700-megawatt electric (MWe) nuclear power reactor, located in Gujarat.
- It commenced full-capacity operations, a little over three years after achieving its 'first criticality' in July 2020.



MIND MAP

NavIC (Navigation in India Constellation)

Indian plans to expand its regional satellite navigation system NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation), to increase its use in the civilian sector and ships, aircraft travelling far from the country's borders.

A. About

- It was developed in India by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its commercial wing ANTRIX.
- The objective of the NavIC is to provide navigation, timing, and reliable positioning services in and around India.

C. Application

- Will help in sending early warning to people of country particularly coastal areas about cyclones, tsunamis, heavy storms etc. and would help in monitoring & rescue operations during disaster times.
- Will help in enhancing India's security by better monitoring of any terrorist activity in border areas.
- Short & long distance travellers and mountain hikers can use navigation satellite system which would be more accurate.

B. Significance of NavIC

- It gives real time information for 2 services i.e. standard positioning service open for civilian use and Restricted service which may be encrypted for authorised user like for military.
- It will help in scientific & technological advancement of India.
- India became one of the 5 countries having their own navigation system like GPS of USA, GLONASS of Russia, Galileo of Europe and BeiDu of China.

D. What is the point of NavIC when others are already in operation?

- GPS and GLONASS are operated by defence agencies of the respective nations.
- It is possible that the civilian service can be degraded or denied.
- NavIC is an independent regional system over the Indian region and does not depend on other systems for providing position service within the service region.
- It is fully under the control of the Government of India.

NavIC
(Navigation
in India
Constellation)

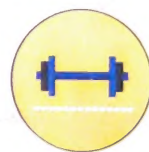
SWOT ANALYSIS

Gujral Doctrine

The Gujral Doctrine is a set of five principles to guide the conduct of foreign relations with India's immediate neighbours, notably Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. The doctrine is based on the principles of mutual respect, non-interference, and cooperation.

Strengths

- Helped strengthen trust and cooperation in India's neighbourhood
- The resolution of the water-sharing dispute with Bangladesh came in just three months in 1996–97.
- India obtained Bhutanese approval for a canal project to increase water flow to the Ganga and also signed agreements with Sri Lanka for expanding development cooperation.
- Led to the starting of composite dialogue with Pakistan.



Weaknesses

- Criticized for going too soft on Pakistan
- Too idealistic and neglecting India's security concerns
- Did not adequately address the security challenges posed by some of India's neighbours, especially in the context of historical conflicts and ongoing geopolitical issues
- Did not effectively address long standing bilateral issues between India and its neighbours



Opportunities

- Future foreign policies should strike a balance between idealistic principles and realistic assessments of security challenges.
- Addressing unresolved bilateral issues with neighbours through a comprehensive and proactive approach
- India should continue strengthening regional alliances and cooperation for mutual benefit.
- Help in conveying the rationale behind diplomatic decisions, mitigating potential domestic opposition



Threats

- Because of its soft approach, India is vulnerable to the threats of the future, including the many terror attacks.
- Emphasis on goodwill and non-reciprocity might be perceived as weakness and could be exploited by adversaries



SWOT ANALYSIS

Draft Broadcasting Regulation Bill, 2023

The Draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023 is a significant legislative proposal comprising six chapters, 48 sections, and three schedules. The bill expands its regulatory purview to cover over-the-top (OTT) content and digital news, areas currently governed by the IT Act, 2000, and its regulations.

Strengths

- Aims to modernize the regulatory framework, adapting to the dynamic world of OTT, digital media, DTH, IPTV, and emerging technologies.
- Strikes a balance between regulatory oversight and industry autonomy.
- The monetary penalties are linked to the investment and turnover of the entity for fairness. Larger corporations with higher investments and turnovers may face higher fines compared to smaller entities with limited financial capacity.
- “Allows for a differentiated approach” to Programme and Advertisement Codes across various services.
- Government’s initiative for a unified law, anticipating that it will streamline compliance and enforcement processes.



Weaknesses

- There is a provision in the draft that emphasises the broad and ambiguous language that grants authorities the power to prohibit content.
- Might lead to the erasure or selective representation of Indian minority communities.
- Fails to address the loopholes and issues in the implementation of the existing Act including conflicts of interest and opaque practices within the Indian media industry.



Opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive and modern legislative framework that encompasses all aspects of broadcasting, including traditional television, OTT platforms, digital media, and emerging technologies.
- Implement a robust content classification and rating system to provide clear guidelines for audiences, which ensures that viewers can make informed choices.
- Establish a fair and efficient process for handling complaints, investigations, and sanctions.
- Establish a mechanism for regular review and update of regulations.
- Establish an independent regulatory body with the authority to enforce and monitor compliance.
- Prioritize investing the media literacy initiatives to inform the public about appropriate media usage.
- Observe and incorporate international best practices in broadcasting regulation.



Threats

- May intensify government control over digital infrastructure and citizens’ viewing choices.
- The draft’s ambiguous language might be used to promote India’s universal majority identity.
- Hiring an “authorised officer” working under the government’s directions clearly may not be separated from political as well as personal influence.
- The government may try to curb certain anti-government agendas while ignoring populist fake news.
- By applying stringent rules and codes to “OTT” broadcasting services may increase the financial and compliance burden and negatively impact user experience, choice, and even cost.



SWOT ANALYSIS

State Funding of Elections in India

State funding of elections refers to a system in which the government provides financial support to political parties and candidates to facilitate their participation in the electoral process.

Strengths

- Can reduce the influence of money in politics, creating a more level playing field where political parties can compete based on ideas and policies rather than financial resources.
- Can reduce dependence on private donors, which may lead to greater independence for elected representatives.
- Decreases the reliance on private donations, minimizing the scope for corrupt practices.
- Can encourage more individuals to participate in politics by removing financial barriers for potential candidates who may not have personal wealth or access to significant private funding.
- Ensures that smaller or emerging parties have a fair chance to participate in the democratic process.



Weaknesses

- Using public funds for elections places an additional burden on taxpayers.
- Rationalists express concerns about the potential misuse of state funds.
- May deprive the political parties of the opportunity to engage in grassroots fundraising and connect with their constituencies on a local level.
- Determining eligibility criteria, distributing funds equitably, and establishing effective monitoring mechanisms among the states is itself a challenge.
- Intra-party democracy deficits may limit the benefits of state funding of elections



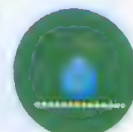
Opportunities

- Strengthen the role of Election Commission of India, to monitor and enforce compliance with campaign finance laws.
- To reduce the effect of huge corporate contributions, impose a cap on the total amount that can be given to political parties.
- Mandate political parties to disclose all sources of funding, including details of donors and the amounts received.
- Implement strong whistleblower protections to encourage individuals with knowledge of illicit funding practices to come forward without fear of retaliation.
- Leverage technology to enhance transparency in electoral funding.



Threats

- May exacerbate the rising fiscal deficit, straining government finances.
- May divert resources from other essential public services.
- Could be manipulated for political advantage, with the ruling party having control over the allocation and distribution of funds, potentially influencing the electoral process.
- May lead to political parties becoming overly dependent on public funds.



SWOT ANALYSIS

Caste Reservation in India

Reservations in India were introduced to rectify the past and historical injustices against the backward classes in India. Article 16 clauses 4 and 4A of the Constitution provide for reservations in appointments to posts and services in favour of the backward class of citizens, which, in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state.

Strengths

- Corrects the historical injustice faced by backward castes in the country.
- Provides a level playing field for the backward section.
- Ensures adequate representation of backward classes in the services under the state for their advancement.
- Ensures equality as the basis of meritocracy, i.e., all people must be brought to the same level before judging them on the basis of merit.



Weaknesses

- Caste Based Reservation perpetuates the notion of caste in society.
- Even after the reservation, irrespective of the economic progress undergone, communities continue to remain socially disadvantaged.
- Are the biggest enemy of meritocracy which is the foundation of many progressive countries.
- The upper-caste poor face discrimination and injustice, which breed
- frustration in society.
- The dominant and elite class within the backward castes got the benefits of reservation, and the most marginalised within the backward castes have remained marginalised.



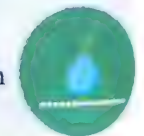
Opportunities

- There should be fair and practical ways to help needy people from each community through reservation, which is possible and necessary.
- There is a need for awareness generation because while the unreserved segments keep on opposing the provision, the neediest sections from within the reserved segments are hardly aware of how to benefit from the provision or even whether such provisions exist.
- The government should exclude the entire creamy layer among all castes from reservation and develop their capabilities instead of offering them reservation for admission to higher education or jobs on a platter.
- It is urgently necessary to make fundamentally revolutionary changes to the educational system.
- Reservation should filter the truly economically deprived individuals and bring them all to justice.



Threats

- Rather than eradicating casteism, reservation promotes it.
- Possibilities of forming new castes in society: Poor people from the forward castes continue to have no socioeconomic benefit over those from backward castes.
- Create inequality, unfair competition, discrimination among the youth and the society.
- Are used for political gain, which can lead to a focus on short-term political objectives rather than long-term development goals.



SWOT ANALYSIS

India-Middle East-Corridor (IMEC)

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) Project was signed at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, which holds significant geopolitical and economic implications for India. It will consist of railroad, ship-to-rail networks, and road transport routes extending across two corridors:

- The East Corridor, connecting India to the Arabian Gulf.
- The Northern Corridor connects the Gulf to Europe.

Strengths

- Creates a comprehensive transportation network, comprising rail, road, and sea routes, connecting India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- Enhances transportation efficiency, reduce costs, increase economic unity, generate employment, and lower Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
- Transforms the integration of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East by facilitating trade and connectivity
- Provides a “reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing maritime and road transports”.



Weaknesses

- Selecting the most viable and cost-effective routes, assessing the feasibility of rail and road connections, and ensuring optimal connectivity.
- Especially in the Middle East, significant portions of rail links are missing.
- Coordinating efforts, policies, and regulations among multiple countries with diverse interests, legal systems, and administrative procedures is a major challenge in realizing this cross-continental corridor.
- It will be difficult to estimate & obtain sufficient funding for the corridor's development, use, & maintenance.



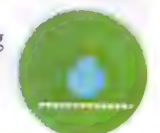
Opportunities

- Presents a transformative opportunity for India to boost economic growth by enhancing its trade connectivity with key regions. It significantly reduces transit times, making trade with Europe 40% faster compared to the Suez Canal maritime route.
- Has the potential to counter China's BRI in the Eurasian region and can serve to counterbalance China's growing economic and political influence.
- The corridor's model could be extended to Africa, aligning with the US and EU's plan to develop a Trans-African corridor.
- As economic activities expand due to improved connectivity, there will be a surge in job opportunities across sectors.
- Can facilitate secure energy and resource supplies, especially from the Middle East.



Threats

- Egypt's Suez Canal may see reduced traffic and revenue, which could pose challenges and diplomatic hurdles.
- There are many intricate geopolitical factors in the Middle East. Persistent disputes and competitions may present obstacles to the continuity and stability of the IMEEEC.
- Piracy, terrorism, and other security threats must be addressed through cooperation among participating nations.



Cause & Effect

Crop Residue Burning

Cause

- Very less time available between rice harvesting and the sowing of wheat. Hence, it is a quick, cheap, and easy way to clear the field of any rice chaff residue.
- Increased modernization and mechanisation of agriculture: Mechanised harvesting extracts the rice grains only, leaving behind a huge residue.
- Due to crop damage, the farmers get less income and are more likely to be inclined to burn their fields to cut costs so that they do not have to spend their money on scientific ways of managing stubble.
- The high price of tractor-mounted 'happy seeders' induced by the government to cut down the rice stubble and sow wheat seeds makes it difficult for farmers to use, so they continue to burn crop residue.

Effect

- Crop residue burning or stubble burning emits large amounts of toxic pollutants in the atmosphere, which contain harmful gases like methane (CH₄), carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOC), and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which adversely affect human health by causing a thick blanket of smog.
- Burning husk on the ground destroys the nutrients in the soil, making it less fertile.
- Burning stubble releases heat into the soil, which causes beneficial bacteria and moisture to be destroyed.

Food Price Inflation in India

Cause

- The prices tend to rise due to imbalances between the supply of food and the demand for it.
- Food prices may increase as a result of farmers' increased production expenses. This covers expenditures for manpower, fuel, and fertiliser.
- Increases in oil prices lead to higher transportation costs for getting food products from farms to stores, which can result in higher prices for consumers.
- The Russia-Ukraine war was one of the biggest causes of food inflation in recent times.
- The emergence of regional trading groups of countries also has some effect on the prices of food commodities for countries outside of that group.

Effect

- Food price inflation directly affects the daily expenses of households. Since a substantial portion of an average Indian household's budget is allocated to food, any increase in food prices can lead to a significant increase in overall expenses.
- It reduces agricultural product profitability and purchasing power, increasing risks and debts, thereby declining the country's economy and agricultural competition on international markets.
- Food inflation causes cost-push inflation, meaning it tends to increase the prices of other goods and services as well.

Governors-State Governments Conflict

Cause

- No clear distinction between the constitutional and statutory roles of the governor.
- No clear provisions for the manner in which the governor and state government must engage publicly when there is a difference of opinion.
- Constitutional loopholes exist in cases of the appointment of the Chief Minister, dissolution of the Assembly, or for how long a Governor can withhold assent to a bill.
- The convention of consulting the Chief Minister before appointing the Governor is often ignored.
- Negative remarks by the governors on state administration, Law and order and political violence have led to conflicts with state governments.

Effect

- Affects public governance and administration
- Erodes the harmonious relationship between the state and the governor's office.
- It destabilises the elected governments as they are under pressure from non-performing governance.
- Corrodes union-state relations. Overall, the federal scheme of the constitution is in a state of disequilibrium.
- Violating the constitutional provisions and the doctrine of constitutional morality by delaying in assenting to the bills by the governor, which were passed by the state legislatures.



GLOBAL BIO-FUEL ALLIANCE

It is an India-led initiative to develop an alliance of governments, international organisations, and industry to facilitate the adoption of bio fuels. India, Brazil, and the US are the founding members of the alliance. Including both G20 members and non-member countries, a total of 19 countries and 12 international organisations have so far agreed to join the alliance.

It aimed at facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable bio fuels, including in the transportation sector. It will do so by bringing together the biggest consumers and producers of bio fuels to drive bio fuels development and deployment. USA (52%), Brazil (30%) and India (3%), contribute about 85% share in production and about 81% in consumption of ethanol.



Emerging Trends

RTI APPEALS, COMPLAINTS DISPOSAL RATE CROSSES 90%

The disposal rate of appeals and complaints filed under the RTI Act has crossed 90 per cent so far this fiscal, according to Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) Heeralal Samariya. As per the CIC data available as on November 9, 11,499 RTI appeals and complaints were disposed of, while 12,695 were received, marking a disposal rate of 90.5 per cent, the statement said.

In 2022-23, 19,018 appeals were registered, while in 2021-22, 19,604 appeals were filed as against 19,183 in 2020-21. As many as 29,210 RTI appeals were disposed of in 2022-23, 28,793 in 2021-22 and 17,017 in 2020-21, it said, adding that the figures include the backlog of pending RTI appeals which were also disposed of during the respective years.

The office of Chief Information Commissioner is the first government body to use artificial intelligence (AI) for study, analysis and pattern of RTIs and “also checking credentials of RTI applicants”.

RUPEE AT ALL TIME LOW AGAINST DOLLAR

The rupee declined by 9 paise to settle at its all-time low of 83.35 against the US dollar on 20th November, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities. Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.25 and settled at its lifetime low level of 83.35 against the dollar, registering a fall of 9 paise from its previous close. On 17th November, the rupee settled at 83.26 against the dollar. Earlier, the rupee closed at its lowest level of 83.33 against the dollar on November 13, this year.

TIGER DEATHS IN NILGIRIS

Ten tigers, including six cubs, were found dead in the Nilgiris from mid-August to mid-September. While at least one was due to poisoning of cattle carcass, infighting was suspected in two other cases. The high number of deaths in an unusually short interval raised questions on poachers' involvement.

The Nilgiris District in Tamil Nadu is home to a rich biodiversity and a large population of tigers. The inability of the state forest department to trace the whereabouts of the two mother tigresses has raised concerns among conservationists about the welfare of the animals.

The Nilgiri cluster in the Western Ghats has one of the highest densities of tigers in the state. According to the Status of Tigers, Co-predators & Prey in India, 2022 report, the total estimation of tigers in the Western Ghats landscape in Tamil Nadu is 306. In MTR, which is contiguous with Bandipur of Karnataka, Wayanad of Kerala, and Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu, 114 tiger individuals were identified. The tiger density was 7.73 tiger per 100 sq km.

USE OF HYBRID SEEDS

Over a decade, popularity of Hybrid Seeds has been increasing among farmers in India due to their quicker harvesting as compared to traditional or Open-Pollinated Variety (OPV) seeds.

With their innumerable benefits, farmers can improve their yields and predict fruit maturity such as drought resilience, pests resistance, and rapid improvement in breeding.

The advent of hybrid seeds, use of quality seeds, mechanization, and advanced technology have entirely reshaped the agriculture scenario altogether, which resulted in enhanced farmers' income as well as the production of all sown crops, leading the government to promote hybrid and high yielding varieties of seeds. Hybrid seeds account for about 6% of India's 44 million hectares under rice cultivation.

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT IN INDIA

Recent statistics show India's rise as the world's third-largest producer of scientific articles, a significant feat for the country's economy. However, beneath this achievement lies a concerning trend revealed by the escalating number of retractions in scientific publications due to errors and misconduct.

According to data from the Retraction Watch Database and Scimago, the surge in retractions, primarily attributed to misconduct, has raised significant concerns. These retractions, while indicative of mistakes or fraudulent claims in research papers, often only represent a fraction of the larger issue of scientific misconduct prevalent in academia.

Scientific misconduct can be described as a deviation from the accepted standards of scientific research, study and publication ethics. There can be many forms of scientific misconduct such as Plagiarism, Misconduct involving experimental techniques, and Fraud.

**ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

The Abraham Accords are a series of agreements signed in 2020 between Israel and several Arab states, marking a historic shift in diplomatic relations in the Middle East. The United States mediated the Accord between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel, promising to normalize ties between these Arab Gulf states and Israel. The primary countries involved in the Abraham Accords include: Israel, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco.

The Abraham Accords stipulated that the UAE and Bahrain would establish their respective embassies in Israel and work together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade and security.

Significance-

- The scope of trade between Israel and other West Asian countries increased 74% between 2021 and 2022.
- The religious significance is that it would allow for Muslims to one of the holiest sites in Islam, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.
- The number of Israelis flying to Bahrain since the establishment of direct flights has increased exponentially.



Game Changers

Climate-Smart Agriculture

Agriculture is confronting a host of difficulties resulting from shifting climate conditions, including frequent extreme weather events, unpredictable rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and the increasing prevalence of destructive storms, making it the most vulnerable sector to climate change. Climate-smart agriculture is the solution, promoting green and climate-resilient practices.

The CSA approach has three goals: growing output and revenues in a sustainable manner, adapting to climate change, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions whenever practicable. This does not imply that every approach employed in every location should result in “triple victories.”

Climate Smart Agriculture aims to decrease trade-offs and encourage synergies in agricultural and livestock systems, forests, and fisheries and aquaculture to make them more productive and sustainable.

Climate Smart Agriculture is neither a new farming system nor a collection of methods. It is a novel strategy to plan development paths that can increase agricultural productivity and sustainability while also contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Bihar Caste Survey Data

On October 2, Bihar government finally released data of the caste survey in the state. The caste data of Bihar will not only serve as a benchmark for affirmative action, but also holds the potential to become a game changer in the Lok Sabha and future elections, as it confirms the overwhelming majority of OBCs (Other Backward Classes) and EBCs (Extremely Backward Castes) in the state.

According to the survey, the two broad social groups (OBCs 27.12 per cent, EBCs 36.01 per cent) together form 63.13 per cent of the state's total population of over 130 million. This could also be the biggest takeaway of Bihar's caste survey. Muslims, often seen as a homogenous voting bloc, are 17.7 per cent. The caste data has also placed Scheduled Castes 19.65 per cent or 25.6 million.

Caste count gives a state a reason for offering maximum government benefits to the largest social group in accordance with the idea of proportional distribution of state-provided assistance. It is expected that the biggest beneficiaries (largest social groups)—as and when given an opportunity for an electoral payback—may opt for their benefactors over other parties.

PM WANI to Revolutionize public Wi-Fi in India

The Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM WANI) scheme is all set to revolutionize public Wi-Fi in India. The PM-WANI launched by the Department of Telecom (DoT) in December 2020, is a framework that enables any entity, such as a shopkeeper, a tea stall owner, or a Kirana store owner, to set up a public Wi-Fi hotspot and provide internet service to customers.

To facilitate ease of doing business and encourage local shops and small establishments to become Wi-Fi providers, it has been approved that the last-mile Public Wi-Fi providers require no license, no registration and will not need to pay any fees to DoT.

Benefits of PM-WANI include it can expand Internet access in rural and remote areas. It can provide an affordable and convenient option for internet access, as compared to mobile technologies like 5G, which require high investment and subscription costs. It can stimulate innovation and competition in the internet market.

AI-Driven Martian Oxygen will Revolutionize Mars Missions

A team of scientists in China say they have found a groundbreaking method using AI-driven chemistry to produce oxygen from Martian meteorites. By converting meteorites into compounds and creating catalysts, this AI-chemist demonstrated a capacity to produce oxygen under simulated Martian conditions, marking a crucial leap towards self-sustaining Martian exploration.

This innovative approach unlocks the potential for utilizing indigenous resources, steering future missions toward cost-effectiveness and reduced complexity. The AI-powered “robot chemist” used a machine learning model to find a compound known as a catalyst that could cause an oxygen-producing chemical reaction on Mars.



FOSTERING ETHICAL AI

AI is the ability of a computer, or a robot controlled by a computer, to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence and perception.

Ethical AI refers to the development and deployment of AI systems in a manner that aligns with ethical principles, societal values, and human rights. It emphasises the responsible use of AI technology to ensure that it benefits individuals, communities, and society as a whole while minimising potential harms and biases.

There are key aspects of ethical AI: transparency and explainability, fairness and bias mitigation, benefit to humanity, privacy and data protection, accountability and responsibility, robustness, and reliability. In 2021, the “Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence” was adopted by UNESCO. It aims to fundamentally shift the balance of power between people, and the businesses and governments developing AI.



A Glimpse of Quarter

Agriculture



26th September, 2023	The “One Nation, One Fertilizer” scheme was launched recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
29th September, 2023	The Union Ministry of Commerce, via its apex agricultural export promotion body, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), has formulated a plan to promote millet export from India.
10th October, 2023	The Indian Government designated National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) as the implementing agency for setting up fodder-centric FPOs.
9th November, 2023	In recent times, the issue of stubble burning in Punjab, India, has drawn significant attention due to its severe environmental impact.
11th November, 2023	With the Supreme Court addressing the issue of farm fires, Punjab has seen a growing demand for a machine that can help manage stubble off-site, known as ex situ stubble management.
13th November, 2023	Right to Information requests found India’s FSSAI lacks data on whether imported produce contains unauthorized GM varieties.
20th November, 2023	A new hotspot map, developed by an international team of researchers, reveals that women engaged in agri-food systems in Africa and Asia, including India, faces the highest climate risks.
23rd November, 2023	Continuous warm temperatures in Assam have been identified as a key factor behind a severe pest infestation that has wreaked havoc on approximately 28,000 hectares of paddy crops across at least 15 districts.
4th December, 2023	The year 2022 witnessed a distressing surge in farmer suicides across India, according to the latest data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), released on December 4, 2023.

Banking



27th September, 2023	RBI has introduced a robust and transparent mechanism for the classification of wilful defaulters, aimed at strengthening accountability and making it more challenging for defaulters to secure funding for future endeavours.
30th September, 2023	The Sebi has made significant amendments to the rules governing the listing of non-convertible debt securities issued by listed entities.
11th October, 2023	The Sebi has unveiled a new framework aimed at streamlining the process of reporting and verification in the event of an investor's demise.
20th October, 2023	RBI has established a nine-member working group to propose a framework for a smoother transition to the expected credit loss-based provisioning system (ECL).
2nd November, 2023	A G20 expert panel dedicated to strengthening Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) has urged these institutions to pivot from financing individual projects to prioritizing sectoral programs aligned with long-term transformation plans proposed by national governments.
8th November, 2023	RBI has introduced a crucial requirement for Indian banks, stating that they must now have a minimum of two whole-time directors (WTDs) on their boards.
12th November, 2023	RBI has announced a significant change in its regulations, allowing District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs) to close un-remunerative branches without seeking prior permission from the central bank.
16th November, 2023	RBI announced the introduction of two significant surveys, the 'Inflation Expectations Survey of Households' and the 'Consumer Confidence Survey,' aimed at providing valuable inputs for its bi-monthly monetary policy decisions.
5th December, 2023	In a recent paper titled 'Cash versus Digital Payment Transactions in India: Decoding the Currency Demand Paradox,' the Reserve Bank highlighted the importance of cybersecurity, customer protection, and cost-effectiveness in sustaining the surge in digital payments catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Railways



5th October, 2023	Rajasthan is preparing to introduce its exclusive heritage train service, the Valley Queen Heritage Train, from Marwar Junction to Khamlighat.
14th October, 2023	India's ambitious Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) project, has reached a significant milestone.
18th October, 2023	India is all set to launch its first regional train service, RapidX, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on 20th October.

31st October, 2023	Prime Minister has dedicated the 77-kilometer New Bhandu-New Sanand section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) to the nation.
5th November, 2023	The Central Railway has introduced the Block Proving by Axle Counter (BPAC) system in the Vasind-Asangaon section of the Mumbai Division, further enhancing safety in train operations.

Environment



26th September, 2023	A recent report from the International Rhino Foundation sheds light on the escalating threat climate change poses to rhino populations in Africa and Asia.
30th September, 2023	The annual phenomenon of the ozone hole over Antarctica has expanded significantly this year, reaching a size nearly three times that of Brazil, according to satellite data from Copernicus, the European Union's Earth observation program.
3rd October, 2023	A study recently published in the journal Science estimates that approximately 23 million people worldwide live on floodplains contaminated by toxic waste from metal mining activity.
9th October, 2023	In recent years, Conocarpus, a fast-growing exotic mangrove species, had been widely used to enhance green cover in Gujarat.
16th October, 2023	New research has unveiled a dire forecast, indicating that over 2 billion people across India, Pakistan, and some of the world's largest cities will face intolerable levels of heat within this century.
22nd October, 2023	A study conducted by the World Bank has revealed that human settlement in the world's riskiest flood zones has increased by 122% since 1985, leading to greater vulnerability to water-related disasters driven by climate change.
29th October, 2023	Mont Blanc, the iconic pinnacle of the Alps, has undergone a notable decrease in elevation, dropping by 2.2 meters since 2021.
4th November, 2023	A recent study led by researchers from the University College London and the Natural History Museum has raised concerns about the potential crisis facing tropical crops like coffee, cocoa, watermelon, and mango due to the declining population of insect pollinators.
9th November, 2023	India has established an inter-ministerial group tasked with developing a comprehensive perspective on key matters to be discussed in global climate negotiations.
30th November, 2023	A recent report from the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) in its World Energy Outlook 2023 has highlighted India's commendable progress in the realm of energy efficiency building codes.

5th December, 2023	Low-income countries could experience a loss of up to 30 percent of essential nutrients from sea food due to climate change, according to a study published in the journal Nature Climate Change.
9th December, 2023	Recent reports from the US Geological Survey (USGS) have drawn attention to a series of earthquakes occurring beneath Mount St. Helens, raising questions about the volcanic activity in the region.
13th December, 2023	Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia have been grappling with a dire humanitarian crisis as they face one of the worst floods in decades.

Finance & Insurance



25th September, 2023	The Union Ministry of Finance recently released its Monthly Economic Review for August 2023, confirming its confidence in a 6.5 percent real GDP growth projection for FY24, characterized by balanced risks.
27th September, 2023	S&P Global Market Intelligence has released a report indicating that Indian banks are becoming more appealing to global investors seeking higher returns.
30th September, 2023	In a ground breaking move aimed at enhancing accessibility and convenience in availing banking services, the State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced the 'Mobile Handheld Device' for its Financial Inclusion (FI) customers.
3rd October, 2023	To support the Indian government's Digital India initiative, SBI introduced a new card called NAV-eCash on the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya.
5th October, 2023	ICICI Bank has recently launched 'iFinance,' a revolutionary feature that is set to change the way millions of customers, including retail clients and sole proprietors, manage their finances.
7th October, 2023	Fincare Small Finance Bank (Fincare SFB) is set to merge with AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) starting from February 1, 2024, pending necessary approvals and regulatory endorsements.
9th October, 2023	Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated a new branch of the State Bank of India (SBI) in Trincomalee and engaged in crucial discussions with her Sri Lankan counterparts as part of the 12th round of the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA).
10th October, 2023	HSBC India, in collaboration with the National E-Governance Services Ltd (NeSL), has introduced electronic bank guarantee services, a ground breaking initiative that aims to streamline trade finance processes.
25th October, 2023	The RBI has unveiled a plan to gradually discontinue the Incremental Cash Reserve Ratio (I-CRR) in response to evolving liquidity conditions.
5th November, 2023	The RBI directed Bajaj Finance Ltd. to stop sanction and disbursement of loans under its two lending products 'eCOM' and 'Insta EMI Card', with immediate effect.
9th November, 2023	SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch urged investors to invest on a long-term basis as it would help in wealth creation, beat inflation and provide real rate of returns.

15th November, 2023	ICRA, the rating agency, predicts a sequential moderation in India's GDP growth to 7% in the July-September 2023 quarter, down from 7.8% in Q1 FY2024.
2nd December, 2023	The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took a significant step by announcing an increase in the UPI payment limits from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh.
9th December, 2023	Banks have been increasing their loan exposure to NBFCs. It has gone up from Rs 7.75 lakh crore in March 2021 to Rs 9.23 lakh crore.

Science & Technology



28th September, 2023	The International Space Station (ISS) is a unique space station in lower Earth orbit, serving as a collaborative platform for five participating space agencies: NASA, Roscosmos, JAXA, ESA, and CSA.
29th September, 2023	WHO has recommended the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine, a product of collaboration between the University of Oxford and the Serum Institute of India, employing Novavax's adjuvant technology.
5th October, 2023	Researchers at the Materials Research Centre (MRC), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), have achieved a breakthrough in wastewater treatment and potential medical diagnostics.
7th October, 2023	Dozens of planet-sized objects have been discovered in the Orion Nebula through observations made by the James Webb Space Telescope, raising questions about the formation of these entities.
10th October, 2023	NASA's Perseverance rover captured a fascinating sight on Mars—an image of a dust devil swirling across the planet's Jezero Crater.
11th October, 2023	A study recently published in the journal Science estimates that approximately 23 million people worldwide live on floodplains contaminated by toxic waste from metal mining activity.
13th October, 2023	NASA is gearing up for an ambitious mission called Psyche, where a high-tech spacecraft will embark on a 2.2 billion mile journey to explore an asteroid known as 16 Psyche.
15th November, 2023	Spanish aerospace company PLD Space has achieved a significant milestone by successfully launching its recoverable Miura-1 rocket.
17th November, 2023	Researchers from Mahidol University in Thailand are exploring the remarkable potential of watermeal, the world's smallest flowering plant, as a source of nutrition and oxygen for astronauts.
18th November, 2023	Hydrilla, an invasive aquatic plant known for its rapid growth and harmful effects on ecosystems, has been found in Michigan, US, for the first time.
19th November, 2023	COVID-19, the global pandemic that swept across nations, brought forth numerous challenges for both patients and healthcare systems.
20th November, 2023	In a ground breaking scientific endeavour, China is constructing the world's largest "ghost particle" detector, the Tropical Deep-sea Neutrino Telescope (TRIDENT), also known as "Hai ling" or "Ocean Bell" in Chinese.

22nd November, 2023	A piece of rock bearing mysterious markings, known as the Saint-Belec slab, which lay largely unstudied for 4,000 years, has become a vital tool for archaeologists in north-western France.
23rd November, 2023	Heman Bekele, a 14-year-old ninth grader from Annandale, Virginia, has achieved an incredible feat by winning the esteemed "America's Top Young Scientist" award.
24th November, 2023	Scientists have achieved a ground breaking feat by successfully activating the world's smallest particle accelerator for the first time.
25th November, 2023	Scientists in Brazil have developed a ground breaking treatment for cocaine and crack addiction in the form of a vaccine named "Calixcoca."
26th November, 2023	Google has introduced three innovative tools aimed at improving image understanding and fact-checking.
27th November, 2023	Recent research has unveiled a connection between mobile phone usage and low sperm counts in men.
29th November, 2023	NASA's ambitious Mars Sample Return mission aims to collect the first-ever rock samples from Mars and bring them to Earth.
1st December, 2023	Scientists have unveiled a ground breaking AI-powered robot chemist capable of synthesizing oxygen-producing compounds from Martian meteorites.
2nd December, 2023	The European Space Agency's (ESA) Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) probe is embarking on an unprecedented journey, utilizing a double gravity assist from Earth and the Moon to propel itself towards Jupiter.
3rd December, 2023	A study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) across 39 network hospitals in India has determined that COVID-19 vaccines are not associated with an increased risk of sudden deaths.
5th December, 2023	Researchers from the U. R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) of ISRO and the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG) have achieved a groundbreaking feat by detecting radiation from an extra-galactic black hole source.
8th December, 2023	Astronomers have made a puzzling discovery, detecting a rare and incredibly high-energy particle named Amaterasu falling to Earth.
9th December, 2023	India's Astro Sat space telescope has reached a significant milestone by detecting its 600th Gamma-Ray Burst (GRB), showcasing the sustained performance of its Cadmium Zinc Telluride Imager (CZTI) eight years post-launch.
10th December, 2023	Recently, the UK confirmed its first human case of the swine flu strain, influenza A (H1N2) v, similar to the one circulating in pigs.
12th December, 2023	In a ground breaking discovery, astronomers have detected the oldest black hole ever observed, residing at the heart of the GN-z11 galaxy, dating back over 13 billion years to the dawn of the universe.
13th December, 2023	The dazzling northern and southern lights, often gracing the night sky with their green, red, and purple brilliance, captivate the hearts of travel enthusiasts worldwide.

International

DATE	NAME	DESIGNATION
SEPTEMBER 2023		
19th September 2023	Nihar Malaviya	CEO of Penguin Random House
20th September 2023	<i>Theirry Mathou</i>	French ambassador in India
22nd September 2023	Bhargav Dasgupta	Vice-President (Market Solutions) Asian Development Bank (ADB)
OCTOBER 2023		
18th October, 2023	Arindam Bagchi	Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the United Nations & other International Organisations in Geneva
26th October, 2023	Sarang Deo	Member of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group (STAG) for Tuberculosis by the WHO
NOVEMBER 2023		
2nd November 2023	Saima Wazed	WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia
14th November 2023	Mika (AI-Powered Robot)	CEO at the Polish beverage company, Dictador
14th November 2023	David Cameron	UK Foreign Secretary
17th November 2023	Shakuntla L Bhaya	Appointed to Administrative Conference of US
20th November 2023	Mira Murati	Interim Chief Executive Officer At OpenAI
22nd November 2023	Colin Jackson	International Ambassador for the Tata Steel Kolkata
23rd November 2023	Girish Chandra Murmu	Vice-chair of the UN Panel of External Auditors
DECEMBER 2023		
4th December 2023	Andry Rajoelina	Third term- President of Madagascar
12th December 2023	Donald Tusk	Prime Minister of Poland
19th December 2023	Reuvan Azar	Isreal's new Ambassador to India



NEW AERODROME LICENSE FOR AYODHYA AIRPORT

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has officially issued the aerodrome license for the eagerly awaited Ayodhya Airport, developed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at a cost of approximately Rs 350 crore.

AAI announced recently that the airport has received an aerodrome license in the public use category, boasting a 2,200m long runway.

The infrastructure includes complete Aeronautical Ground Lights (AGLs) and is supported by DVOR & Instrument Landing System (ILS), enabling operations in all weather conditions, including night flights and low visibility/RVR 550m.

DVOR, or Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Range, aids in the navigation of aircraft, while RVR, or Runway Visual Range, is crucial for operations during low visibility conditions.



Awards & Honours

National

SARASWATI SAMMAN



DATE: 16th October, 2023

Tamil writer **Sivasankari** was honoured with the Saraswati Samman 2022 for her memoir (biography) “**Surya Vamsam.**”

Key Points:

- “Surya Vamsam” is a two-volume memoir that traces the author’s literary journey and societal transformations over seven decades.
- This award is given annually to literary works published in the last 10 years by Indian writers of 22 languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- The award is presented by the K.K. Birla Foundation includes a citation, plaque, and a prize of Rs. 15 lakh.
- The Saraswati Samman is among the highest recognitions in the field of Indian literature.
- Besides the Saraswati Samman, the Vyas Samman and the Bihari Puraskar are other literary awards instituted by the foundation.

RASHTRIYA VIGYAN PURASKAR AWARDS



DATE: 21st November, 2023

Recently, the Ministry of Science and Technology has announced ‘**Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar**’ (RVP) at par with the Padma and other national awards.

Key Points :

- Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Included Awards Vigyan Ratna Awards, Vigyan Shri Awards, Vigyan Team Awards, Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (VY-SSB).
- The awards encompass diverse criteria, incorporating technology-led innovations and collaborative team efforts.
- To ensure that the RVP system recognizes only truly “notable and inspiring contributions”, the awards’ descriptions must include a statement that the contributions are over and above the standard job description of a scientist/technologist, not merely incremental work or work integral to their appointment.

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS**Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award 2023**

S. No.	Name of the player	Sporting Event
1	Chirag Chandrashekhar Shetty	Badminton
2	Rankireddy Satwik Sai Raj	Badminton

Arjuna Awards, 2023 for outstanding performance in sports and games

S. No.	Name of the player	Sporting Event
1	Ojas Pravin Deotale	Archery
2	Aditi Gopichand Swami	Archery
3	Srishankar M	Athletics
4	Parul Chaudhary	Athletics
5	Mohammad Hussamuddin	Boxing
6	R Vaishali	Chess
7	Mohammed Shami	Cricket
8	Anush Agarwal	Horse Riding
9	Divyakriti Singh	Horse Riding Dressage
10	Diksha Dagar	Golf
11	Krishna Bahadur Pathak	Hockey
12	Pukhrambam Sushila Chanu	Hockey
13	Pawan Kumar	Kabaddi
14	Ritu Negi	Kabaddi
15	Nasreen	Kho-Kho
16	Pinki	Lawn Balls
17	Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar	Shooting
18	Isha Singh	Shooting

19	Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu	Squash
20	Ayhika Mukherjee	Table Tennis
21	Sunil Kumar	Wrestling
22	Antim Panghal	Wrestling
23	Naorem Roshibina Devi	Wushu
24	Sheetal Devi	Para Archery
25	Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy	Blind Cricket
26	Prachi Yadav	Para Canoeing

Dronacharya Award 2023 for outstanding coaches in sports:**Regular Category**

S. No.	Name of Coach	Sporting Event
1	Lalit Kumar	Wrestling
2	R B Ramesh	Chess
3	Mahavir Prasad Saini	Para Athletics
4	Shivendra Singh	Hockey
5	Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar	Malkhamb

Lifetime Category

S. No.	Name of Coach	Sporting Event
1	Jaskirat Singh Grewal	Golf
2	Bhaskaran E	Kabaddi
3	Jayant Kumar Pushilal	Table Tennis

Dhyan Chand Award 2023 for lifetime achievement in sports and games

Sl. No.	Name of the player	Sporting Event
1	Manjusha Kanwar	Badminton
2	Vineet Kumar Sharma	Hockey
3	Kavita Selvaraj	Kabaddi

International

NORMAN BORLAUG FIELD AWARD

DATE: 22nd September 2023

Swati Nayak, a scientist with roots in Odisha, is set to receive 2023 Norman Borlaug Field Award in appreciation of her groundbreaking approach in involving farmers in demand-driven rice seed systems.



Key Points:

- The coveted award honours her innovative approach to engaging farmers in demand-driven rice seed systems, from testing and deployment to access and adoption of climate-resilient and nutritious rice varieties.
- Swati Nayak serves as a scientist and holds the position of South Asia lead for seed system and product management at the CGIAR-International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) located in the Philippines.
- She became the third Indian to receive this prestigious award after Aditi Mukherji (2012) and Mahalingam Govindaraj (2022), recognizing her remarkable contributions to agriculture, particularly in the realm of drought-tolerant rice varieties.
- The Norman Borlaug Field award is endowed by the Rockefeller Foundation, the award is presented every October in Des Moines, Iowa, US by the World Food Prize Foundation to honor individuals under the age of 40 who have achieved remarkable, science-based accomplishments in international agriculture and food production.
- The award is named after Norman E. Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution and the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

BOOKER PRIZE 2023



DATE: 22nd September 2023

The judging panel for the Booker Prize 2023 has included **'Western Lane,'** the debut novel by **Chetna Maroo**, an author of Indian descent based in London among the final list of six novels.

Key Points:

- London-based Indian-origin author Chetna Maroo's debut novel, 'Western Lane,' has earned a well-deserved place on the prestigious Booker Prize shortlist.
- The novel tells the poignant story of an 11-year-old British Gujarati girl named Gopi and her profound bonds with her family.
- At its core, 'Western Lane' explores the challenges faced by an immigrant father who endeavors to raise his family as a single parent.
- The Booker Prize 2023 boasts a substantial prize purse of £50,000, which will be awarded to the winning author of the first-place book.

SASTRA RAMANUJAN PRIZE



DATE: 30th September 2023

Mathematician **Ruixiang Zhang**, an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, receives the 2023 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize for his pioneering contributions in number theory.

Key Points:

- The award recognizes Ruixiang Zhang's remarkable contributions to the field of mathematics.
- Ruixiang Zhang has made significant contributions across various mathematical domains such as Generalization of Vinogradov's Mean Value Theorem, Breakthroughs in Restriction Theory.
- Dr. Zhang earned his Ph.D. in mathematics from Princeton University in 2017.
- Over the years, he has held positions at various academic institutions and is currently affiliated with the University of California since 2021.

- Dr. Zhang has been recognized with multiple awards, including a Sloan Fellowship (2022-24) and an NSF CAREER award (2022-27).

NOBEL PRIZE 2023



DATE: 2nd October, 2023

The Nobel Prize winners in 2023 represent a diverse range of fields and disciplines, but they are all united by their extraordinary contributions to humanity.

Key Points:

- The 2023 Nobel Prize announcements took place from October 2 to October 9, 2023.
- The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to **Katalin Karikó** and **Drew Weissman** for their pioneering work on mRNA vaccines, which have played a pivotal role in the fight against COVID-19.
- Their discoveries have the potential to revolutionize the way we prevent and treat infectious diseases.
- The Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to **Pierre Agostini**, **Ferenc Krausz** and **Anne L'Huillier** "for experimental methods that generate attosecond pulses of light for the study of electron dynamics in matter".
- The Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to **Moungi G. Bawendi**, **Louis E. Brus** and **Alexei I. Ekimov** "for the discovery and synthesis of quantum dots".
- The Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to Norwegian author **Jon Fosse** or **Jon Olav Fosse** "for his innovative plays and prose".

USISPF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AWARD



DATE: 30th October, 2023

Nita Ambani received the 2023 USISPF Global Leadership Award for her philanthropic work through Reliance Foundation.

Key Points:

- Nita Ambani, Founder and Chair of Reliance Foundation, was honoured with the 2023 USISPF Global Leadership Award for Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- The award was presented by John Chambers, Chairman of USISPF, at a reception in New Delhi attended by prominent figures from the USISPF, Indian business leaders, and Government of India officials.
- Nita Ambani, an acclaimed philanthropist and businesswoman, has impacted millions of lives in India through Reliance Foundation's initiatives in education, arts, sports, and healthcare.

2023 BOOKER PRIZE

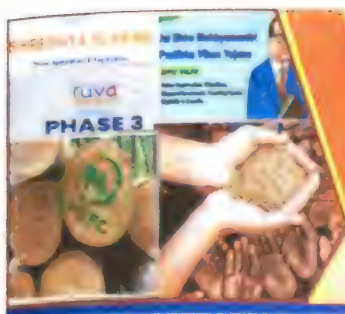


DATE: 28th November 2023

Irish author **Paul Lynch** secured this year's prestigious Booker Prize for his fifth novel, '**Prophet Song**,' in a glamorous ceremony held at Old Billingsgate.

Key Points:

- Paul Lynch is an acclaimed Irish writer, recognized for his outstanding contribution to literature. His novel 'Prophet Song' has now earned him the coveted 2023 Booker Prize, solidifying his place among the literary elite.
- Paul Lynch joins the ranks of distinguished Irish writers by becoming the fifth to clinch the Booker Prize in its 54-year history.
- The novel 'Prophet Song' unfolds the gripping narrative of Eilish Stack as she grapples with protecting her family in a slowly deteriorating Ireland succumbing to totalitarianism.
- Lynch's storytelling skillfully captures the challenges and complexities of the protagonist's journey in this dystopian landscape.



Policies & Schemes

SHRESHTA SCHEME



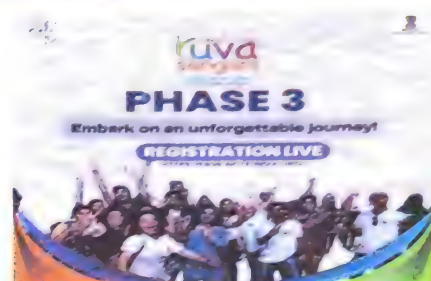
DATE: 11th October, 2023

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment introduces the SHRESHTA Scheme to deliver high quality education and foster a holistic development environment for Scheduled Caste students.

Key Points:

- The primary objective of this initiative is to extend the influence of government development programs and address service gaps in regions predominantly inhabited by SC communities within the education sector.
- SHRESHTA, designed to **provide high-quality education to SC students**, aims to create an environment conducive to their holistic development and secure their future prospects.
- The first category includes top CBSE/State Board-affiliated private residential schools known as SHRESHTA institutions.
- The second implementation approach relates to existing **NGO/VO-operated schools and hostels**.
- This approach is specifically intended for educational institutions up to the 12th grade that are managed by voluntary organizations (VOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

YUVA SANGAM PHASE III



DATE: 19th October, 2023

The registration portal for the eagerly awaited Phase III of Yuva Sangam, a flagship initiative under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB), was officially launched.

Key Points:

- This visionary program, crafted by the Government of India, seeks to strengthen the people-to-people connections among the youth hailing from different States and Union Territories (UTs) of India.
- Young individuals between the ages of 18-30, including students, NSS/NYKS volunteers, employed/self-employed persons, and more, are invited to register through the YUVA SANGAM portal for the upcoming Phase.
- **Yuva Sangam**, operating under the umbrella of EBSB, takes inspiration from the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
- In Phase III of Yuva Sangam, the program has reached new heights, encompassing 20 eminent institutions across India.
- The success of Yuva Sangam is a testament to collaborative efforts from various ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Home Affairs, Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, Information & Broadcasting, and Railways.
- Each ministry plays a unique role in implementing this remarkable initiative.

JAI BHIM MUKHYAMATRI PRATIBHA VIKAS YOJNA



DATE: 28th October, 2023

Govt of Delhi is inviting applications from eligible students belonging to SC/ST/OBC/EWS categories for free coaching under the “Jai Bhim Mukhyamantri Pratibha Vikas Yojna.”

Key Points:

- The initiative aims to provide coaching for various competitive examinations and entrance tests.
- Eligible students can receive free coaching from specific empanelled coaching institutes.
- Students also have the option to join non-empanelled coaching institutes and receive fee reimbursement, subject to the scheme's prescribed limit.
- Coaching fees as prescribed under the scheme will be paid to the institute or reimbursed to the students.
- Students will receive a stipend of Rs. 2500 per month directly in their bank accounts during the course period.

DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENT POLICY 2023

DATE: 10th November 2023

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has approved the Digital Advertisement Policy, 2023.

Key Points:

- It enables and empowers the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) to undertake campaigns in the Digital Media space.
- The CBC can advertise on social media, Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, digital audio platforms, mobile applications, and websites.
- It mandates that the websites, mobile apps, OTT platforms and digital audio platforms need to be at least a year old to be eligible to apply under the scheme.
- Advertising rates will be linked to subscriber base and viewership numbers, determined through

competitive bidding to ensure transparency and efficiency.

- OTT platforms can be empanelled not only for placing advertisements during regular content but also for the production of embedded/in-film advertisements, promotions, or branding activities as per CBC's Letter of Intent.
- The CBC typically utilizes 2% of the total outlay of government schemes for publicity and outreach activities, and this fund is used for advertisements and campaigns.

PRADHAN MANTRI JANJATI ADIVASI NYAYA MAHA ABHIYAN



DATE: 6th December, 2023

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) with total outlay of Rs.24,104 crore (Central Share:Rs.15,336 crore and State Share: Rs.8,768 crore) to focus on 11 critical interventions through 9 line Ministries.

Key Points:

- The Prime Minister announced the Abhiyan on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas from Khunti, Jharkhand.
- As announced in the Budget Speech 2023-24, “to improve socio-economic conditions of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Pradhan Mantri PVTG of Development Mission will be launched.
- This will saturate PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities such as safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health and nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- An amount of Rs.15,000 crore will be made available to implement the Mission in the next three years under the Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Tribes (DAPST).”

- India has ST population of 10.45 crore as per 2011 census, out of which 75 communities located in 18 States and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

GARIB KALYAN FOOD GRAIN PROGRAMME



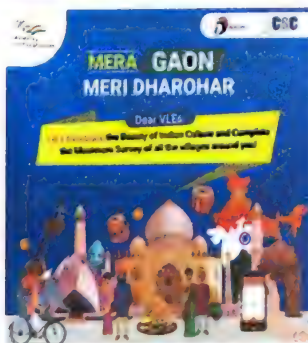
DATE: 29th November, 2023

Cabinet approves Garib Kalyan food grain programme for another 5 years.

Key Points:

- Union cabinet meeting, chaired by PM Narendra Modi, approved that the central government will provide free grains to eligible citizens under the public distribution scheme for another five years.
- The PM Garib Kalyan Yojana was initially started during the start of the Covid pandemic, where ration card holders were entitled to receive an additional five kg grains.

MEGA GAON MERI DHAROHAR



DATE: 8th December, 2023

The Government of India has decided to map and document all villages under Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar Programme.

Key Points:

- The National Mission on Cultural Mapping is conducted in coordination with Indira Gandhi

National Centre for the Arts under the Ministry of Culture.

- A web portal on MGMD has also been launched.
- The MGMD will make information detailing of life, history, and ethos of Indian villages.
- Under the MGMD, information is collected under seven broad categories as given below-
 - Arts and Crafts Village
 - Ecologically Oriented Village
 - Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India
 - Epic Village linked with Ramayana, Mahabharata and/or Puranic legends and oral epics
 - Historical Village linked with Local and National History
 - Architectural Heritage Village

FOREST CERTIFICATION SCHEME



DATE: 13th December, 2023

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has introduced the Indian Forest & Wood Certification Scheme.

Key Points:

- This voluntary national certification initiative aims to encourage sustainable forest management and agro forestry practices in India.
- The scheme encompasses forest management certification, tree outside forest management certification, and chain of custody certification.
- Based on the Indian Forest Management Standard, aligned with the National Working Plan Code 2023.
- Includes 8 criteria, 69 indicators, and 254 verifiers to ensure responsible forest management.
- Focuses on agro forestry practices, promoting sustainable management beyond traditional forest areas.



Bills & Acts

MEDIATION ACT, 2023

DATE: 4th October, 2023

This Act seeks to promote mediation, particularly institutional mediation, and provide a mechanism for enforcing mediated settlement agreements.

Key Points:

- **Pre-litigation Mediation:** Parties must attempt to settle civil or commercial disputes by mediation before approaching any court or certain tribunals.
- Even if they fail to reach a settlement through pre-litigation mediation, the court or tribunal may at any stage refer the parties to mediation.
- **Disputes not fit for Mediation:** The Act contains a list of disputes which are not fit for mediation.
- These include disputes relating to claims against minors or persons of unsound mind, involving criminal prosecution, and affecting the rights of third parties.
- The Act will apply to mediations involving only domestic parties, involving at least one foreign party and relating to a commercial dispute, if the mediation agreement states that mediation will be as per this Act.

DIGITAL INDIA ACT 2023

DATE: 9th October, 2023

The Digital India Act 2023 is a newly introduced legal framework in India aimed at regulating and governing the country's evolving digital landscape.

Key Points:

- DIA replaces the outdated Information Technology Act of 2000 to address contemporary internet and technology challenges.
- DIA focuses on online safety, trust and accountability while regulating emerging technologies like AI and block chain.
- Collaborates with related laws and policies, including the Digital Personal Data Protection Act and National Data Governance Policy.

- Reviews the 'safe harbor' principle, ensuring online platforms are accountable for user-generated content.
- Enforces stringent Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements for retail wearable devices, backed by legal sanctions.
- Aligns with Digital India Goals for 2026, targeting a USD 1 trillion digital economy and global technology leadership.

BROADCASTING SERVICES (REGULATION) BILL, 2023

DATE: 10th November 2023

- Union Ministry of Information and broadcasting has invited comments on the Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023.

Key Points:

- It addresses a long standing need of consolidating and updating the regulatory provisions for various broadcasting services under a single legislative framework.
- The bill introduces comprehensive definitions for contemporary broadcasting terms and incorporates provisions for emerging broadcasting technologies.
- It enhances self-regulation with the introduction of 'Content evaluation committees' and evolves the existing Inter-Departmental Committee.
- It allows for a differentiated approach to Programme and Advertisement Codes across various services and requires self-classification by broadcasters and robust access control measures for restricted content.
- The bill addresses the specific needs of persons with disabilities.
- The draft Bill introduces statutory penalties such as: advisory, warning, censure, or monetary penalties, for operators and broadcasters.
- The bill also includes provisions for infrastructure sharing among broadcasting network operators and carriage of platform services.

INDIAN POST OFFICE BILL, 2023**DATE:** 6th December 2023

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the Post Office Bill, 2023, legislative move aimed at revamping and modernizing the country's postal services.

Key Points:

- The statement of objects and reasons behind the bill highlights the need for a simplified legislative framework to govern post offices in the country.
- The bill proposes to repeal the archaic Indian Post Office Act, which has been in existence for 125 years, and aims to consolidate and amend laws related to post offices in India.
- Bill empowers the central government to authorize officers to intercept, open, or detain items in the interest of national security, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergency, public safety, or to address contraventions of existing laws.
- The opposition has raised concerns about Section 9 of the bill, particularly the provision that grants post office officials the authority to intercept, open, or detain items.
- The bill also grants the director general of postal service's the authority to frame regulations and fix charges for services.

REVISED RUBBER (PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT) BILL, 2023**DATE:** 8th December 2023

The Union government plans to reconstitute the Rubber Board and inviting public input on the revised draft Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill, 2023.

Key Points:

- The Rubber Board is set to hold open house sessions in Kottayam, Marthanadam (Tamil Nadu), and Mangaluru (Karnataka) to engage stakeholders, including growers, dealers, and manufacturers.
- The revised draft focuses on ensuring quality standards for rubber produced or processed in, exported from, or imported into India. It includes provisions for quality, marking, labeling, and packing.
- Growers have raised concerns about the revised draft, calling for provisions to ensure a minimum

price for rubber based on production costs and also concerned about the potential impact on the autonomy of the Rubber Board and issues related to billing Crude Rubber.

- The newly constituted Rubber Board, as per the revised draft, will have a maximum of 31 members. The post of Executive Director will be replaced with a Chief Executive Officer, who will also serve as member-secretary.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023**DATE:** 8th December 2023

The Lok Sabha passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023, advancing the establishment of a crucial central tribal university in Telangana.

Key Points:

- The primary focus of the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023, is the establishment of the 'Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University' in Telangana.
- The university's territorial jurisdiction will extend to the state of Telangana, emphasizing its localized impact and relevance.
- The envisioned institution is poised to serve as a significant hub for higher education and research, contributing to academic excellence.
- A distinctive feature of the proposed legislation is its specific emphasis on empowering tribal communities across India.
- The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, which led to the formation of Telangana as a separate state, mandates the central government to establish a tribal university in Telangana.

JAMMU & KASHMIR REORGANISATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023 AND JAMMU & KASHMIR RESERVATION AND REORGANISATION (AMENDMENT) BILL**DATE:** 8th December 2023

The Lok Sabha has passed two significant bills related to Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at providing rights to those who faced injustice and were deprived of their rights in the Union Territory.

Key Points:

- Amendment Proposed by Jammu & Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aims to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004.
- The amendment suggests a change in the nomenclature of a section of people previously described as “weak and underprivileged classes (social castes)” to “other backward classes.”
- Amendment Proposed by Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023 it introduces changes to Section 2 of the 2004 Act.
- Provides representation in the Legislative Assembly to Kashmiri migrants and displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Proposes the nomination of two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one person representing displaced persons from PoK to the Legislative Assembly.
- Proposes an increase in the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly from 83 to 90.
- Introduces provisions to reserve seats for members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- Inserts new sections 15A and 15B in the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, allowing the Lieutenant Governor to nominate members from the community of “Kashmiri Migrants” and “Displaced Persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir” to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.
- Distribution of Seats
 - Two seats reserved for the Kashmiri Migrant community.
 - One seat in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly reserved for people displaced from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
 - Nine seats reserved for SC/ST communities for the first time.

**SIMBEX 23**

It is an annual bilateral Naval exercise, conducted since 1994, between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). It is the longest continuous naval exercise that the Indian Navy has conducted with any other country.

Indian Naval Ships Ranvijay and Kavaratti and submarine INS Sindhukesari arrived in Singapore to participate in the 30th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX). Besides Ranvijay, Kavaratti, and Sindhukesari, Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I is also participating in the exercise.

SIMBEX-2023 is being conducted in two phases –

- Harbour Phase
- Sea Phase.

The Harbour Phase will witness a wide range of professional interactions, cross-deck visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), and sports fixtures, aimed at enhancing interoperability and mutual understanding between the two navies.

The Sea Phase of SIMBEX 23 will involve complex and advanced air defence exercises, gunnery firings, tactical manoeuvres, anti-submarine exercises, and other maritime operations.



Sports

National

The Atal Bihari Training Centre for Disability Sports



DATE: 9th October, 2023

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the country's first high-tech sports training centre for Divyangjan, named after former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points:

- The initiative aims to provide equal opportunities in sports, enhance talent, and encourage participation in various sports disciplines.
- Divyangjan from all over the country can practice and train in the Atal Bihari Training Center for Divyang Sports.
- The Atal Bihari Training Centre for Disability Sports is set to witness a momentous occasion as the Honourable Prime Minister will inaugurate the facility on 2nd October.
- The Atal Bihari Training Centre for Disability Sports represents a pivotal step towards providing equal opportunities in sports to individuals with disabilities, fostering their talents, and encouraging their participation in various sporting disciplines.
- The Atal Bihari Training Centre for Disability Sports is a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to training and nurturing athletes with disabilities.

- It is an Autonomous body established by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India.

Rahul Dravid to Continue as India's Head Coach



DATE: 29th November, 2023

Rahul Dravid has accepted the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) offer to extend his term as India's head coach, ensuring his continued leadership of the national team.

Key Points:

- Dravid's initial two-year tenure concluded at the end of the 2023 ODI World Cup, but his impressive achievements and the team's growth under his guidance prompted the BCCI to seek his extension.
- His first assignment after the contract renewal will be the tour of South Africa.
- Dravid's extended tenure will commence with India's upcoming tour of South Africa, which begins with a series of three T20Is and three ODIs starting on December 10.

13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023



DATE: 1st December, 2023

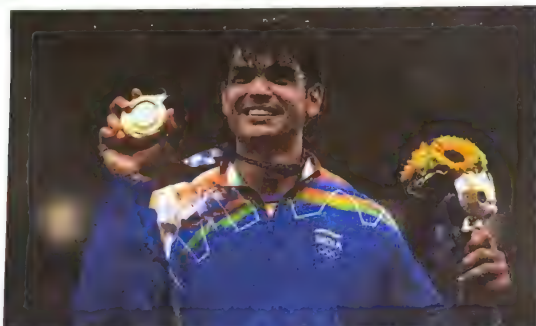
Hockey Punjab emerged victorious over Hockey Haryana to clinch the gold medal at the 13th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2023.

Key Points:

- The tournament was held from November 17 to 28, 2023, at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- Harmanpreet Singh, Hockey Punjab defeated Hockey Haryana with a close margin of 9-8 after the match was tied 2-2 at regulation time.
- This marks Hockey Punjab's fourth title in the tournament's 13 editions.
- Hockey Punjab's victory marks a significant achievement for the team, cementing their position as a dominant force in Indian hockey.

International

World Athlete of the Year Award



DATE: 14th October, 2023

World Athletics has nominated Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra for the 2023 Men's Athlete of the Year award. Chopra, an Olympic and World Champion, faces strong competition from 10 other athletes.

Key Points:

- The honor underscores Neeraj's remarkable achievements in the field of javelin throwing and his impressive gold medal victories at the Olympics and World Championships.
- A panel of international athletics experts, representing all six continental areas of World Athletics, diligently selected the **11 nominees** for this prestigious award.
- Among these nominees, Neeraj Chopra, the Olympic and world champion, is vying for the title of the world's best male athlete.

Asian Games 2023



DATE: 14th October, 2023

Recently, the 19th Asian Games (of 2022, held in 2023) came to a close at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium (also called Big Lotus) in China. Hockey player PR Sreejesh was India's flagbearer at the parade of athletes.

Key Points:

- With an unprecedented haul of 107 medals (28 gold, 38 silvers and 41 bronze), India set a new benchmark for themselves at the Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou, the People's Republic of China.
- At the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, India performed well and returned with 70 medals, including a haul of 16 gold medals.
- It was the first time in Asian Games history that India's medals tally crossed the three-figure mark.
- By doing so, they became the only fourth country after China (383), Japan (188) and the Republic of

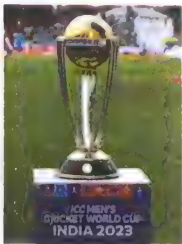
- Korea (190) to win 100 or more medals in a single edition of the Asian Games.
- 2023 Games saw two medal sports make their debut: e-Sports and Breakdancing.
 - Apart from them, Cricket, and board games - Go, Xiangqi, and Chess returned to Asian Games in this edition after not featuring in the 2018 Asia.

Asian Games 2023 Medal Standings				
Team/NOC	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
People's Republic of China (CHN)	201	111	71	383
Japan (JPN)	52	67	69	188
Republic of Korea (KOR)	42	59	89	190
India (IND)	28	38	41	107
Uzbekistan (UZB)	22	18	31	71
Chinese Taipei (TPE)	19	20	28	67
Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)	13	21	20	54
Thailand (THA)	12	14	32	58

ICC Cricket World Cup 2023

DATE: 18th October, 2023

World Cup 2023 Time table is the complete schedule of cricket world cup 2023, which was hosted by India after 2011.



Key Points:

- The tournament's opening match features the 2019 World Cup winners, England, and the runners-up, New Zealand, taking place at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- This competition comprises 10 teams, including the defending champions, England.
- India are best-placed to clinch a semi-final spot following their six straight victories, as only Bangladesh have dropped out of contention.
- South Africa, New Zealand and Australia join hosts India in the critical top-four spots at the moment, but with 14 group stage matches still to play almost every team is still in the hunt.

4th Asian Para Games



Hangzhou 2022
Asian Para Games

DATE: 30th October, 2023

India Grabs 111 Medals At The 4th Asian Para Games.

Key Points:

- Indian para-athletes achieved a historic milestone at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou by securing 111 medals: 29 gold, 31 silver, and 51 bronze.
- Dilip Mahadu Gavit secured 100th medal in the competition by winning a gold medal in Men's 400m T47 event.
- Gavit's extraordinary performance was highlighted by his impressive run time of 49.48 seconds.
- The 4th Asian Para Games in Hangzhou saw Indian para-athletes surpassing the 100-medal milestone for the first time.
- India's previous best performance at the Asian Para Games occurred in 2018 in Jakarta when the contingent secured a total of 72 medals.
- This historic achievement at the Asian Para Games is a testament to the potential that exists within the country's para-athletic community.
- India finished fifth on the Asian Para Games 2023 behind hosts China, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
- China won 521 medals, including 214 gold to occupy the top spot.

India's Ambitious Bid to Host the 2036 Olympic Games



DATE: 30th October, 2023

Recently, Prime Minister Modi announced India's intention to host the Olympic Games, ideally in 2036 during the opening ceremony of the 141st International Olympic Committee session in Mumbai.

Key Points:

- China, South Korea, and Japan are the only Asian countries to have hosted the Olympics, with Japan having hosted the games in both 1964 and 2020.
- Cities submit a letter of interest to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- It involved a lengthy multi-year, multi-step evaluation process.
- Upcoming Events are:
 - **Summer Olympics 2024:** Paris, France
 - **Winter Olympics 2026:** Milan-Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy
 - **Summer Olympics 2028:** Los Angeles, USA
 - **Summer Olympics 2032:** Brisbane, Australia

Para Asian Games 2023



DATE: 1st November, 2023

India finished the campaign with 29 gold, 31 silver and 51 bronze to get 111 medals in total.

Key Points:

- The Asian Para Games 2023 are taking place in Hangzhou, China, from October 22 to 28.
- India has dispatched its largest-ever contingent to the fourth edition of the Asian Para Games.
- India crosses the coveted 100 medal mark with the 26th gold clinched by Dilip Gavitt in the men's T-47 400m event.
- Indian para-athletes continued to shine at the fourth Asian Para Games in Hangzhou.
- With this, India clinches the 5th position in the overall medal tally behind China, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea.
- Out of the 111 medals secured, female para-athletes have contributed significantly, accounting for 40 medals, constituting 36% of the total medal tally.

ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023



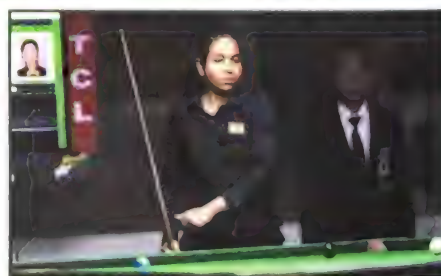
DATE: 19th November, 2023

In the final showdown of the Cricket World Cup 2023, Australia clinched victory against India by a margin of six wickets at the Narendra Modi Stadium situated in Ahmadabad.

Key Points:

- The match witnessed a remarkable performance by Australia's Travis Head, who secured a century.
- This triumph marked Australia's sixth World Cup title, establishing a new record as they had previously secured victories in 1987, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2015 editions of the tournament.
- India secured triumph in the World Cup twice, in 1983 and 2011.
- Australia's Travis Head was declared the Player of the Match in his side's 2023 ODI World Cup final win against India in Ahmadabad.
- The Australian opener top-scored for his side in a 241-run chase, with a 120-ball 137.

Snooker World Title



DATE: 21st November, 2023

Veteran cueist Vidya Pillai clinched the IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Championship title in Doha, Qatar, triumphing 4-1 against compatriot Anupama Ramachandran.

Key Points:

- Vidya showcased a stellar performance, dominating her opponents throughout the championship, with a standout victory of **4-1 against compatriot Anupama Ramachandran in the title clash.**

- She dominated Group 'A' with an impeccable all-win record and proceeded to outplay compatriot Varshaa Sanjeev 3-0 in the pre-quarters.
- The quarterfinal clash against On Yee showcased Vidya's exceptional skill, as she secured a flawless 4-0 victory, leaving her opponent with only 15 points in the entire match.

Shane Dowrich Announces International Retirement



DATE: 1st December, 2023

Shane Dowrich, the seasoned wicketkeeper-batsman, has announced his retirement from international cricket and subsequently withdrawn from the West Indies squad set to face England in the upcoming ODI.

Key Points:

- The West Indies Cricket Board (CWI) confirmed the unexpected decision, marking the end of Dowrich's international cricket journey.
- From his debut against Australia to becoming a reliable wicketkeeper-batsman for the West Indies, Dowrich has left an indelible mark on the cricketing landscape.
- As his transitions into a new phase of life, Dowrich leaves behind a legacy of contributions to West Indies cricket, and his absence will undoubtedly be felt in the upcoming ODI series against England.

Vaishali Rameshbabu becomes Grandmaster



DATE: 6th December, 2023

Vaishali Rameshbabu, a 22-year-old chess player from India, has recently earned the title of Grandmaster at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain.

Key Points:

- This achievement makes her only the third woman from India to become a Grandmaster, following in the footsteps of **Koneru Humpy** and **Harika Dronavalli**.
- Her victory over Turkish FM Tamer Tarik Selbes was pivotal in crossing the 2500 FIDE rating threshold required for the Grandmaster title.
- This accomplishment is particularly significant as it makes Vaishali and her younger brother, **Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa**, the first brother-sister pair in history to both hold Grandmaster titles.
- They have also become the first brother-sister duo to qualify for the Candidates, a prestigious chess tournament.

ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024



DATE: 6th December, 2023

In a groundbreaking achievement, **Uganda's cricket team** has earned its place in the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024**, securing a top-two finish in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa qualifier.

Key Points:

- The team's impressive performance, particularly the recent nine-wicket victory over Rwanda, marks their debut in a senior ICC World Cup event.
- Uganda now joins a distinguished list of teams that have qualified for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.
- The event, featuring 20 teams, will witness a format change with four groups of five teams each.
- The top two teams from each group will progress to the Super Eight phase, leading to the semi-finals and the ultimate showdown in the final.

IPL Auction 2024



DATE: 6th December, 2023

The ten franchises participating in the Indian Premier League 2024 have retained 173 players ahead of the IPL mini-auction 2024, scheduled on December 19 in Dubai.

Key Points:

- Chennai Super Kings, Lucknow Super Giants and Sunrisers Hyderabad have retained 19 players each. Meanwhile, Kolkata Knight Riders have retained 13 players.
- The total money spent to hold the 173 players was ₹ 737.05 crores.
- However, there has been an increase in the purse limit of the IPL franchises for the 2024 season, making their total purse value ₹ 100 crore (US \$12 million).

WPL 2024 Auction

DATE: 6th December, 2023

The much-anticipated auction for the second edition of the TATA Women's Premier League (WPL) is scheduled to commence on Saturday, December 9, in Mumbai.



Key Points:

- The forthcoming **WPL 2024** tournament is expected to kick off in February or March next year, bringing together a total of 165 players from five franchises.
- The participating teams include Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals, UP Warriorz, Gujarat Giants, and Royal Challengers Bangalore, with 104 Indian players and 61 overseas players set to go under the hammer during the auction.
- The first edition of WPL in 2023 witnessed the **Mumbai Indians** emerging victorious after defeating **Delhi Capitals** by **7 wickets** in the final match.
- Smriti Mandhana was the most expensive player in the inaugural season, securing a deal with Royal Challengers Bangalore for INR 3.40 crore (\$4.07 million).



TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The two-state solution refers to an arrangement where Israeli and Palestinian states co-exist in the region. The solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict can be achieved by dividing the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea into two separate countries.

In 1947, Britain referred the issue to the United Nations, which suggested the partition plan (Resolution 181). In 2000, UNSC Resolution 1397 became the first UNSC resolution to agree on a two-state solution after the U.S.A. extended support. It was considered the most workable solution that could fulfil the basic desires of both Jews and Arabs by creating separate states in which neither Jews nor Arabs are in the minority. It will also ensure that the aspirations of one community will not be overridden in pursuit of the other's aspirations.

Earlier, Jews accepted this idea, while Arabs rejected it. However, there is now support for a two-state solution from the Arab world and Western nations. Despite this, Israel now seems hesitant to create a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital because of fear of increased attack, peace may result in a single Palestinian state without Israel, etc.

Books & Authors

NAME OF THE BOOKS	AUTHORS
SEPTEMBER 2023	
People's G20	Shri Apurva Chandra
OCTOBER 2023	
My Dance with Buddha for Success	Viyek Agnihotri
The Reverse Swing: Colonialism to Cooperation	Ashok Tandon
NOVEMBER 2023	
'Do Palkon Ki Chhavn Main'	Dr. Hema Joshi
Thread By Thread on the life of Shambhu Kumar Kasliwal	Released by Kapil Dev
'Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers'	Sharmishtha Mukherjee
India's Moment: Changing Power Equations Around the World	Launched by Vikram K. Doraiswami
'Welcome To Paradise'	Launched by Twinkle Khanna
'Welcome To Paradise'	Twinkle Khanna
India's Moment: Changing Power Equations around the World	Mohan Kumar
DECEMBER 2023	
Indian Punter League: A True Story Of Fake IPL	Abhishek Bhatt
Naye Bharat ka Samaveda	Many Indian and foreign authors



SUB-CATEGORISATION WITHIN CASTES

Sub-categorization within castes refers to the process of creating sub-groups within the existing categories of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) for reservation and affirmative action.

It aims to address intra-category inequalities and ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits and opportunities among the most deprived and marginalised sections of society.

There is a constitutional mandate and a judicial endorsement for sub-categorisation within castes, as Article 16 (4) of the Constitution empowers that the State can make any provision for reservation in matters of promotion in favour of the SCs and STs if they are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

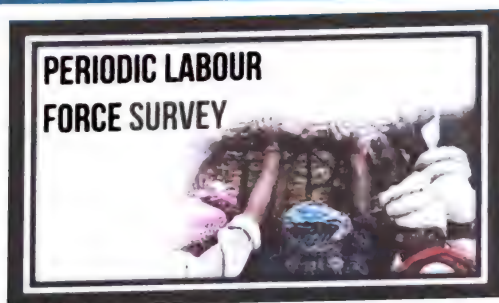
The challenges of sub-categorization within castes are a lack of reliable and updated data, legal and political backlash, and weakening their collective identity.



Reports & Indices

National

PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



DATE: 14th October, 2023

Recently, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2022-2023 on the basis of Periodic Labour Force Survey conducted during July 2022-June 2023.

Key Points:

- It is a survey conducted by the NSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) to measure the employment and unemployment situation in India.
- The NSO launched the PLFS in April 2017.
- LFPR is the percentage of the working-age population (aged 15 years and above) that is either employed or unemployed, but willing and looking for employment.
- To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the 'Current Weekly Status' (CWS).
- To estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both 'Usual Status' and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.

ANNUAL REPORT ON 'ROAD ACCIDENTS IN INDIA-2022'



DATE: 3rd November, 2023

The Annual Report on 'Road Accidents in India-2022' has been published by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

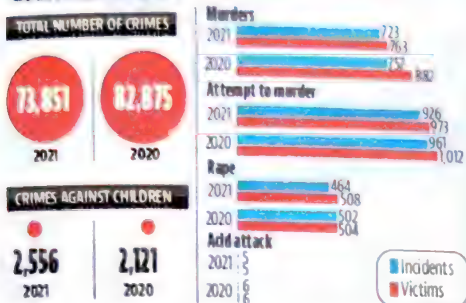
Key Points:

- The report is based on the data/information received from police departments of States/UTs on calendar year basis in standardized formats as provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the Asia Pacific Road Accident Data (APRAD) base project.
- As per the report, a total of 4,61,312 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2022, which claimed 1,68,491 lives and caused injuries to 4,43,366 persons.
- This marks an increase of 11.9% in accidents, 9.4% in fatalities, and 15.3% in injuries compared to the previous year.
- The report underscores the urgency of adopting a comprehensive approach to address the contributing factors to these accidents, including speeding, reckless driving, drunken driving, and non-compliance with traffic regulations.

- The Ministry is actively involved in initiatives such as implementation of modern transportation systems, road safety audits, and international collaborations to learn from global best practices.

NCRB'S CRIME IN INDIA 2022 REPORT

CRIME CHART



DATE: 14th December, 2023

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has recently unveiled its annual report titled "Crime in India for 2022," providing a comprehensive overview of crime trends across the nation.

Key Points:

- A total of over 58,00,000 cognizable crimes were registered, comprising both the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special & Local Laws (SLL) crimes.
- The crime rate per lakh population dropped from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.
- Kolkata emerged as the safest city in India for the third consecutive year, recording the least number of cognisable offences per lakh population among metropolises.
- Cybercrime reporting surged by 24.4%, totalling 65,893 cases, a significant surge from 52,974 cases in 2021.
- In 2022, India witnessed a significant surge in suicides, totalling over 1.7 Lakh cases, reflecting a concerning increase of 4.2% compared to 2021.
- The suicide rate also rose by 3.3%, calculated as the number of suicides per lakh of the population.
- Maharashtra reported the highest number of suicides, followed closely by Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Telangana.
- Daily wage earners constituted a significant portion, accounting for 26.4% of the total suicides.
- The Crime in India report highlighted an overall increase in crimes and atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) persons.
- A total of 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were reported in 2022, marking a 4% increase.
- Cases of crimes against children showed an increase of 8.7% compared to 2021.
- Cases of crimes against senior citizens rose by 9.3% to 28,545 cases compared to 26,110 cases in 2021.

International

INDIA AGEING REPORT 2023



DATE: 28th September 2023

India is on the cusp of a significant demographic shift, as revealed by the India Ageing Report 2023.

Key Points:

- Report is jointly released by the **International Institute for Population Sciences** and the **United Nations Population Fund**.
- By 2050, more than 20 percent of India's population is expected to be elderly, signifying a rapid aging trend.
- As of July 1, 2022, India had 149 million people above the age of 60, constituting 10.5 percent of the total population.
- By 2050, it is estimated that 20.8 percent of the population, equivalent to 347 million Indians, will be senior citizens.
- By 2031, the report estimates that there will be 951 men for every 1,078 women in the elderly age group.
- In states like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh, women can expect to live up to four years longer than men.

MERCY CORPS REPORT



DATE: 28th September, 2023

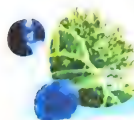
A new report by Mercy Corps, warns that disruptions in the Black Sea grain route could exacerbate food insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions.

Key Points:

- The report focuses on several nations in the MENA region, including Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Jordan, Iraq, and the occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza). It also considers North African states such as Tunisia and Egypt.
- The report highlights the critical role of Black Sea grain exports in meeting the food demands of these regions.
- The report points out that India also banned rice exports in July 2023 to safeguard domestic supply.
- Countries like Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, heavily dependent on imported food, are particularly vulnerable due to state fragility, economic obstacles, limited domestic production potential, and inadequate government-led mitigation measures.

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2023

Top 10
Most innovative
economies



- Switzerland
- Sweden
- United States of America
- United Kingdom
- Singapore
- Finland
- Netherlands
- Germany
- Denmark
- Republic of Korea

Global
Innovation
Index 2023

DATE: 3rd October 2023

India retains 40th rank out of 132 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2023 rankings published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Key Points:

- Switzerland is the most innovative economy in 2023 followed by Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore.

- Singapore has entered the top five, and has taken the leading position among South East Asia, East Asia and Oceania (SEAO) region economies.
- S&T clusters are the areas in the world where the highest density of inventors and scientific authors are located.
- China now has the largest number of clusters in the world, overtaking the United States.
- India secured the 40th position in the latest GII 2023, showcasing a remarkable climb from the 81st spot in 2015.
- This ascent underscores India's consistent and substantial growth in innovation over the past eight years.
- GII is a leading reference for measuring an economy's innovation ecosystem performance.

METHANE MITIGATION TO COMBAT GLOBAL WARMING



DATE: 16th October, 2023

Recently, a new report titled "The Imperative of Cutting Methane from Fossil Fuels" released jointly by the International Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UNEP-convened Climate and Clean Air Coalition, emphasizes the significance of targeted methane mitigation to combat global warming.

Key Points:

- The Key Findings from the Report is Mitigating methane emission is essential to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Globally, approximately 580 million tonnes of methane are emitted annually.
- Under current trajectories, total anthropogenic methane emissions could rise by up to 13% between 2020 and 2030.
- Even with deep cuts in fossil fuel use, not addressing methane could lead to global temperatures exceeding 1.6°C by 2050.
- Targeted methane mitigation measures are imperative and should complement decarbonization efforts.

- Existing technologies can help avoid over 80 million tonnes of annual methane emissions from fossil fuels by 2030.
- Around USD 75 billion is required by 2030 for all methane reduction measures in the oil and gas sector in the Net Zero scenario.
- Actions such as eliminating routine venting and flaring and repairing leaks are a must to reducing methane emissions from the energy sector and for this, the organisations called for appropriate regulatory frameworks.

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2023

India ranks 111 out of 125 countries in Global Hunger Index



DATE: 19th October, 2023

In the Global Hunger Index 2023, India ranked 111th out of 125 countries, indicating a serious level of hunger.

Key Points:

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a peer-reviewed report, published on an annual basis by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
- Neighboring countries, such as Pakistan (102nd), Bangladesh (81st), Nepal (69th), and Sri Lanka (60th), scored better than India.
- The GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger - 0 is the best score (implies no hunger) and 100 is the worst.
- Each country's GHI score is calculated based on a formula that combines four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger.
- India's GHI score 2023 stands at 28.7, categorized as "serious" on the GHI Severity of Hunger Scale.
- The prevalence of undernourishment in India is 16.6% (State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report 2023).

- India's child wasting rate is a concerning 18.7% (India's NFHS 2019-21), the highest among all countries in the report.
- The under-five mortality rate stands at 3.1% (United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation January 2023).
- According to the GHI 2023 report, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China are among the top ranked countries (i.e., low level of hunger) and Yemen, Madagascar, Central African Republic are the bottom.
- The GHI 2023 score for the world is 18.3, considered moderate, showing minimal improvement since 2015.

U.S. PENTAGON REPORT ON CHINA'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL



DATE: 19th October, 2023

The Pentagon's 2023 report reveals that China is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal, exceeding prior estimates. China's goal is to have over 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030.

Key Points:

- The Pentagon report highlights that China's nuclear force is growing at an accelerated pace.
- Last year, it was predicted that China could nearly quadruple its number of nuclear warheads to 1,500 by 2035.
- The 2023 report suggests that China is on track to have over 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030.
- China's aim is to modernize its military to become "world-class" by 2049.

STATE OF ENERGY UNION REPORT 2023

DATE: 25th October, 2023

The Report shows how the EU responded collectively and effectively to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and weaponisation of its energy supplies, by accelerating



the clean energy transition, diversifying supplies and saving energy.

Key Points:

- The REPowerEU Plan and a series of emergency legislative measures ensured that Europe avoided energy supply disruptions, eased pressure on energy markets, prices and consumers, and pursued the structural reform of our energy system.
- This was done through the European Green Deal legislation and through increased deployment of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency.
- The EU is also on track to deliver on its REPowerEU targets.
- Ahead of the winter 2023-2024, the EU is better prepared to ensure its energy security, thanks to well-coordinated actions to fill gas storages, diversifying energy import routes and infrastructure, investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, and collective efforts to reduce energy demand.

GLOBAL TAX EVASION REPORT 2024



GLOBAL TAX EVASION REPORT 2024

DATE: 29th October, 2023

Recently, the European Union Tax Observatory has released 'Global Tax Evasion Report 2024' highlighting several critical issues related to tax evasion, the Global Minimum Tax (GMT) on billionaires, and measures to combat tax evasion.

Key Points:

- The report, titled "The Gender Snapshot 2023," highlights the report investigates the effects of international reforms adopted over the past 10 years, such as the automatic international exchange of bank information, and the international agreement on a global minimum tax for MNCs, among other issues.
- Offshore tax evasion has decreased over the past decade.
- In 2013, 10% of the world's GDP was stored in global tax havens, but now only 25% of this wealth remains untaxed.

- Global billionaires have effective tax rates equivalent to 0% to 0.5% of their wealth, due to the frequent use of shell companies to avoid income taxation.
- Multinational corporations (MNCs) have shifted around USD 1 trillion to tax havens in 2022, equivalent to 35% of the profits they earned outside their headquarters countries.
- Tax evasion, wealth concealment, and profit shifting to tax havens are not natural occurrences but results of policy choices or the failure to make necessary choices.
- The report advocates for a global minimum tax on billionaires, proposing a rate of 2% of their wealth.
- Institute mechanisms to tax wealthy people who have been long-term residents in a country and choose to move to a low-tax country.

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT, 2023



DATE: 7th November, 2023

As per the latest edition of Adaptation Gap Report, 2023 released by UN Environment Programme, developing countries, together, need at least USD 215 billion every year this decade to carry out meaningful adaptation work. In 2021, just about USD 21 billion went to developing countries for adaptation projects, which was down about 15% from the previous years.

Key Points:

- The adaptation finance gap – the difference between estimated adaptation financing needs and costs and finance flows – has grown over the past.
- The adaptation gap is likely 10-18 times as great as current international adaptation finance flows – at least 50% higher than previous range estimates.
- The current adaptation finance gap is now estimated at USD 194-366 billion per year.
- Of the international public finance for adaptation that is also tagged with gender equality as a principal objective, only 2% is assessed as gender-responsive, with a further 24% considered gender-specific or integrative.

- Report calls for a reform of global financial architecture, to ensure greater and easier access to finance for climate-related purposes from multilateral agencies the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after it has become evident that current levels of international financial flows for fighting climate change are highly inadequate.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS: ASIA 2024



QS World University Ranking (Asia) 2024

DATE: 13th November, 2023

Recently, the global higher education think-tank **Quacquarelli Symonds** has released the QS Asia University Rankings: Asia 2024, including 148 universities from India in the comprehensive list of 856 universities across Asia.

Key Points:

- QS World University Rankings are released annually by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).
- The rankings evaluate the performance and quality of universities worldwide.
- The methodology considers indicators such as academic reputation, faculty-student ratio, employer reputation, sustainability, employment outcomes, international research network, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio.
- Peking University (China) topped the list, followed by the University of Hong Kong (Hongkong) and National University of Singapore (NUS) (Singapore).
- IIT Bombay retains its top ranking in India and is ranked 40th in Asia.
- Seven Indian institutions are **among the top 100 in Asia**, with five of them being **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**, along with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and Delhi University.
- The increasing visibility of Indian universities in international rankings reflects the expansion of India's higher education landscape and its contributions to global research.

THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2023



DATE: 11th November, 2023

A new report titled 'The State of Food and Agriculture 2023', by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reveals the staggering hidden costs of unhealthy diets and ultra-processed foods, impacting both our health and the environment.

Key Points:

- Unhealthy diets, characterized by the consumption of ultra-processed foods, fats, and sugars, lead to substantial hidden costs.
- These costs exceed USD 7 trillion annually, reflecting the economic burden of **health-related issues** like obesity and non-communicable diseases.
- The majority of hidden costs were generated in **upper-middle-income (39%)** and **high-income countries (36%)**, with **lower-middle-income countries at 22%** and **low-income countries at 3%**.
- India's total hidden costs in agrifood systems were approximately USD 1.1 trillion, ranking as the third-largest globally after China and the United States.
- The consumption of highly processed foods is on the rise in **peri-urban and rural areas worldwide**.
- Among the nine South Asian countries, **India had the third highest prevalence of undernourishment (233.9 million)** in the total population, after Afghanistan and Pakistan, the analysis showed.

COMPOSITE WATER MANAGEMENT INDEX

DATE: 12th November, 2023

The Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) is launched by **NITI Aayog** to provide an annual snapshot of the water sector status and water management performance of the states and union territories (UTs) in India.



Key Points:

- Launched in June 2018 by Niti Aayog, the CWMI's debut edition spotlighted India's water challenges, rating states based on 28 parameters, utilizing data from 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- The report was a result of collaborative efforts between NITI Aayog and three key ministries: Water Resources, Drinking Water & Sanitation, and Rural Development.
- The NITI Aayog attributed delays in the third and fourth rounds of the CWMI to the unavailability of updated data caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Considerations were made to combine rounds 3.0, 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 to cover the years 2021-22 and 2022-23, while contemplating extending data coverage to the district level.

BIOECONOMY REPORT 2022

DATE: 14th November, 2023

India aims to increase the Bioeconomy's contribution to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) from 2.6% to 5% by 2030, as outlined in the 'Bioeconomy Report 2022' by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

**Key Points:**

- India's bioeconomy is on a robust growth trajectory, projected to reach USD 150 billion by 2025 and surpass USD 300 billion by 2030.
- The sector experienced a remarkable 14.1% increase, reaching USD 80 billion in 2021 compared to USD 70.2 billion in 2020.
- In 2021, the sector witnessed the establishment of three biotech startups daily, totalling 1,128 for the year.
- With over USD 1 billion invested in research and development, the industry is demonstrating a commitment to innovation and advancement.
- Amidst the global pandemic, India administered 4 million Covid-19 vaccine doses and conducted 3 million tests daily, showcasing its resilience and capacity.
- Over the past decade, the number of biotech startups has soared from 50 to over 5,300, with expectations of doubling by 2025.
- The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has played a pivotal role by establishing 74 bio-incubation centers across 21

states/UTs, fostering a supportive environment for bio-entrepreneurs.

- Notably, India boasts the second-highest number of USFDA (United States Food and Drug Administration)-approved manufacturing plants outside the US, underscoring its global standing in the biotech industry.

BASIC ANIMAL HUSBANDRY STATISTICS 2023 REPORT

DATE: 27th November, 2023

The Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2023 report, released by Union Minister, highlights substantial growth in milk, egg, and meat production in India during the fiscal year 2022-23.

Key Points:

- The report, based on the Animal Integrated Sample Survey conducted between March 2022 and February 2023, provides insights into the performance of the livestock sector.
- India's milk production increased by 3.8% year-on-year, reaching 230.58 million tonnes in 2022-23.
- Uttar Pradesh contributed the highest share at 15.7%, followed by Rajasthan (14.44%), Madhya Pradesh (8.73%), Gujarat (7.49%), and Andhra Pradesh (6.70%).

WORLD MALARIA REPORT 2023

DATE: 4th December, 2023

The WHO report reveals that global malaria cases surged to 249 million in 2022, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 16 million, emphasizing the need for resilient responses.

Key Points:

- **Malaria cases globally rose to 249 million in 2022**, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 16 million.
- The global malaria response faces numerous challenges, including **COVID-19 disruptions**, drug and insecticide resistance, humanitarian crises, resource constraints, and climate change impacts.
- The 2023 World Malaria Report investigates the intricate relationship between climate change and malaria. Temperature, humidity, and rainfall changes influence the behaviour of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and extreme weather events directly impact disease transmission.
- **WHO-certified malaria-free countries in 2022 include Azerbaijan, Belize, and Tajikistan.**

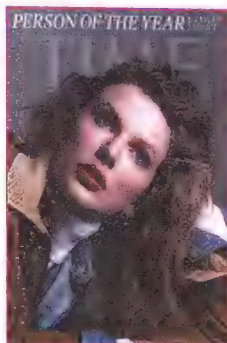
TIMES PERSON OF THE YEAR

DATE: 4th December, 2023

Taylor Swift has been named Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023.

Key Points:

- This recognition comes on the heels of her title as the most-played artist on Spotify, underscoring the widespread impact of her music and influence.
- As Taylor Swift receives the prestigious title of **Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2023**, it serves as a reflection of her multifaceted impact on music, culture, and society.
- Beyond the accolades and financial success, Swift's ability to connect with audiences on a global scale showcases the enduring power of her artistry.
- In a world where influence is measured in various dimensions, Taylor Swift stands tall as a true person of the year.



FORBES ASIA HEROES

Gautam Adani
Chairman, Adani Group
India



ASIA'S 2022
HEROES OF
PHILANTHROPY

DATE: 4th December, 2023

Three prominent Indian business leaders – Nandan Nilekani, KP Singh and Nikhil Kamath, have earned a coveted spot on the 17th edition of Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list.

Key Points:

- **Nadan Nilekani, co-founder and chairman of the renowned tech giant Infosys**, has been acknowledged for his substantial contribution of **Rs.3.2 billion (USD 38 million) to his alma mater, IIT Bombay.**
- This philanthropic gesture, spread over five years, is a poignant celebration of **his 50-year association** with the esteemed institute, where he pursued his undergraduate studies in electrical engineering.
- Since **1999**, Nilekani's cumulative donations to the institute have reached a commendable **Rs.4 billion.**

FORBES' 2023 'WORLD'S 100 MOST POWERFUL WOMEN'



DATE: 4th December, 2023

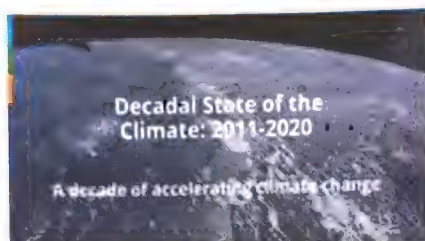
Forbes' 2023 'World's 100 Most Powerful Women' includes India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman (32nd), HCL's Roshni Nadar Malhotra (60th), SAIL's Soma Mondal (70th).

Key Points:

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, HCL Corporation Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Steel Authority Of India Chairperson Soma Mondal, and Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw have earned positions on this prestigious list.
- Nirmala Sitharaman, serving as **India's first full-time female finance minister**, achieves her best ranking yet at number 32, marking her fifth consecutive appearance on the list.
- Forbes highlights her groundbreaking role and emphasizes her prior experiences at the UK-based Agricultural Engineers Association and BBC World Service before entering politics.

- Ranked 60th. **Roshni Nadar Malhotra**, who assumed the role of HCL's Chairperson in July 2020, holds an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management.

THE GLOBAL CLIMATE 2011-2020: WMO



DATE: 8th December, 2023

Recently, the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)** has published a report titled- **The Global Climate 2011-2020: A Decade of Acceleration**, concerning the alarming acceleration of climate change and its multifaceted impacts across the planet.

Key Points:

- The decade 2011-2020 emerged as the warmest on record for both land and ocean.
- Global mean temperature soared to $1.10 \pm 0.12^\circ\text{C}$ above the 1850-1900 average, with each decade since the 1990s surpassing previous ones in warmth.
- Record high temperatures were reported in numerous countries, with 2016 (due to an El Niño event) and 2020 standing out as the warmest years.
- Atmospheric concentrations of major greenhouse gases (GHG) continued to rise, especially CO_2 , reaching 413.2 ppm in 2020, primarily due to fossil fuel combustion and land-use changes.
- Ocean warming rates accelerated significantly, with 90% of accumulated heat stored in the ocean. Warming rates doubled in the upper 2000m depth from 2006-2020, impacting marine ecosystems.
- **Marine Heat waves** increased in frequency and intensity, **affecting about 60% of the ocean's surface** between 2011 and 2020.
- Glaciers globally thinned by about 1 meter/year between 2011 and 2020, with unprecedented mass loss, affecting water supplies.

GLOBAL CLIMATE PERFORMANCE INDEX



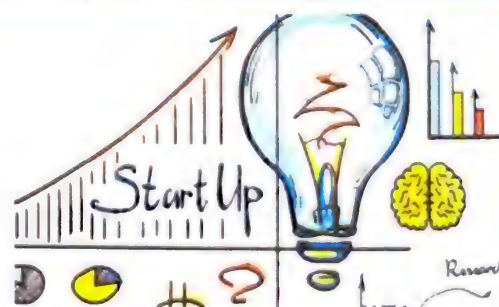
DATE: 11th December, 2023

India's remarkable rise to 7th place in the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) is fueled by its outstanding performance in renewable energy and low greenhouse gas emissions.

Key Points:

- The announcement, made during the COP-28 in Dubai, solidifies India's status as a top performer for the fifth consecutive year.
- India's exceptional ascent is primarily attributed to its outstanding performance in renewable energy, surpassing other developing nations.
- India shines in the greenhouse gas emissions category, boasting low emission levels and minimal travel-related impact.
- The focus on the food sector, a crucial component of the CCPI, significantly contributes to India's remarkable standing.

GLOBAL RANKING OF INDIA'S STARTUP FUNDING IN 2023



DATE: 11th December, 2023

India's startup scene witnessed a funding setback in 2023, slipping to fourth place globally with only \$7 billion in total funding.

Key Points:

- **India**, once a powerhouse in the global startup ecosystem, has experienced a significant downturn in its funding trajectory, slipping to the **fourth position** in the **global ranking** among the highest-funded geographies in **2023**.

- This decline comes after securing the third spot in both 2021 and 2022.
- After consecutively holding the third position, India finds itself behind the **US**, the **UK**, and **China** in 2023, receiving a meager **\$7 billion** in total funding by **December 5**, according to data from **Tracxn**.
- The decline was primarily driven by a staggering 73% drop in late-stage funding, falling from \$15.6 billion in 2022 to \$4.2 billion in 2023, marking the lowest funding quarter in the last five years.

WORLD'S 3RD MOST VALUABLE TOBACCO COMPANY



DATE: 11th December, 2023

ITC Ltd has surpassed British American Tobacco (BAT) to become the world's third most valuable tobacco company, with a market capitalization of \$68.6 billion.

Key Points:

- In a significant market shift, **ITC Ltd** has emerged as the **third** most valuable **tobacco company globally**, overtaking **British American Tobacco (BAT)**.
- The transition follows a sell-off in BAT shares, underscoring ITC's dynamic business diversification.
- As ownership gradually shifted to Indian hands, the company underwent name changes, becoming India Tobacco Company Limited in 1970 and later **I.T.C. Limited** in 1974.

RICHEST MAN IN INDIA 2023



DATE: 21st December, 2023

In the global hierarchy of billionaires, India secures the third position with around 167 individuals holding this esteemed status. Mukesh Ambani has consistently retained his title as the richest man in India for 14 consecutive years.

Key Points:

- Mr. Mukesh Ambani, the **Managing Director and Chairman of Reliance Industries**, is the richest man of India.
- Reliance Industries forms is a significant part of his wealth, which is involved in diverse sectors such as petrochemicals, oil and gas, retail, telecom and more.
- Gautam Adani is the **second richest person in India**, known for his remarkable success in business and entrepreneurship.
- Cyrus Poonawalla is the **third richest man in India**.

Rank	Name	Global Rank	Net Worth (in US Dollar)	Source of wealth
1.	Mukesh Ambani	13	\$86.9 B	Reliance Industries
2.	Gautam Adani	24	\$49.1 B	Adani Group
3.	Cyrus Poonawalla	53	\$28.4 B	Serum Institute of India
4.	Shiv Nadar	64	\$24.5 B	HCL Technologies
5.	Savitri Jindal & Family	82	\$20.5 B	JSW Group



Railways

'MARTYR CAPTAIN TUSHAR MAHAJAN RAILWAY STATION'



DATE: 21st September, 2023

Udhampur Railway Station was renamed as 'Shaheed Captain Tushar Mahajan Railway Station'.

Key Points:

- After the Jammu and Kashmir Administration approved an order regarding renaming of Udhampur Railway Station, Northern Railway has issued a notification to rename it as 'Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan Railway Station' in honour of the Army braveheart.
- The journey of Captain Tushar Mahajan begins with his birth on May 25, 1987 in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir.
- A look at the remarkable military career of Captain Tushar Mahajan, with a special focus on his role in the 9 Para Special Forces Unit, popularly known as "9 Parachute Commando".
- The ultimate sacrifice of Captain Tushar Mahajan in a counter-terrorism operation in Pampore, Jammu and Kashmir in February 2016 highlights the cost of valour.

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY



DATE: 3rd October, 2023

President Joko Widodo of Indonesia officially launched Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway project, named 'Whoosh', primarily financed by China.

Key Points:

- The ambitious project, known as the "Whoosh" high-speed railway, is a key component of **China's Belt and Road Initiative** and is poised to dramatically reduce travel times between two vital Indonesian cities.
- With an estimated cost of **\$7.3 billion**, this monumental infrastructure project was predominantly funded by China.
- It was brought to fruition through the joint efforts of **PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia-China (PT KCIC)**, a collaboration between an Indonesian consortium comprising four state-owned companies and **China Railway International Co. Ltd.**
- The high-speed railway connects the sprawling metropolis of **Jakarta** with **Bandung**, the bustling capital of West Java province.

PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK

DATE: 10th October, 2023

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina marked a historic moment in the country's infrastructure development by inaugurating the 82-km Padma Bridge Rail Link.

Key Points:

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiled the Dhaka-Bhanga section of the rail route, connecting Dhaka and Jashore via the Padma Bridge.
- The inauguration ceremony took place at Mawa Railway Station in Munshiganj.
- The remaining portion of the project, linking Jessore, is scheduled to be launched in June next year, according to project officials, as reported by the Dhaka Tribune.

RAJASTHAN'S VALLEY QUEEN HERITAGE TRAIN

DATE: 10th October 2023

Rajasthan is preparing to introduce its exclusive heritage train service, the Valley Queen Heritage Train, from Marwar Junction to Khamlighat.

Key Points:

- The Valley Queen Heritage Train is Rajasthan's only heritage train service.
- It replicates the design of a 150-year-old steam engine, providing passengers with a nostalgic experience.
- It departs from Marwar Junction at 8.30 am, reaching Khamlighat at 11 am via Phulad and Goram Ghat railway stations.
- The Valley Queen Heritage Train offers a picturesque journey, passing through lush green valleys, hills, and showcasing rare flora and fauna.

- The railway line from Mavli Junction to Phulad was constructed by the Maharana of Mewar (Udaipur), while the railway line from Marwar Junction to Phulad was constructed by the Maharaja of Marwar (Jodhpur).

OPERATIONALISATION OF THE EASTERN DEDICATED FREIGHT CORRIDOR

DATE: 14th October 2023

India's ambitious Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) project, has reached a significant milestone.

Key Points:

- This development comes after a successful trial run of the first freight train over the 401-kilometer-long New Sahnewal (Punjab) to New Khurja (Uttar Pradesh) section of the EDFC.
- The entire 1337-kilometer EDFC is now declared operational, marking a significant step in India's infrastructure development. First commercial service on this route is scheduled to commence on November 1.
- The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) has reported that more than 95% of the total Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) will be completed by March 2024.
- At present, 2383 kilometers, which represents 83.8% of the total length of 2843 kilometers, have been commissioned.

INDIA'S FIRST REGIONAL TRAIN SERVICE

DATE: 17th October 2023

India is all set to launch its first regional train service, RapidX, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on 20th October.

Key Points:

- The priority section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) will open, covering a distance of 17 kilometers between Duhai and Sahibabad.
- The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS is the first of three prioritized corridors planned for implementation in Phase I in India followed by the Delhi-Gurugram-SNB-Alwar and Delhi-Panipat corridors.
- The project was built at a total cost of \$20.274 billion and received funding from institutions like the Asian Development Bank, New Development Bank, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

- The project is developed by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), which is a joint venture involving the Government of India and the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

WESTERN DEDICATED FREIGHT CORRIDOR'S NEW SECTION FOR FASTER GOODS TRANSPORT

DATE: 31st October 2023

Prime Minister has dedicated the 77-kilometer New Bhandu-New Sanand section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) to the nation.

Key Points:

- The new section of the DFC significantly enhances connectivity with major ports in Gujarat, including Pipavav, Porbandar, and Jamnagar.
- Furthermore, the newly inaugurated section has boosted connectivity to vital freight terminals such as Viramgam, Jakhwada, Detroj, Linch, and freight loading centers in the Jamnagar area.
- One noteworthy achievement of the DFC is the operation of heavy and long-haul trains with a 25-tonne axle load on bridges and formations designed for a 32.5-tonne axle load, a first in India.
- The double-line electrified track will enable the DFC to transport more freight at faster speeds.
- The DFC has achieved impressive average speeds, with the highest recorded at 99.82 kilometers per hour.

CENTRAL RAILWAY ENHANCES SAFETY WITH BLOCK PROVING BY AXLE COUNTER SYSTEM

DATE: 1st November 2023

The Central Railway has introduced the Block Proving by Axle Counter (BPAC) system in the Vasind-Asangaon section of the Mumbai Division, further enhancing safety in train operations.

Key Points:

- The BPAC system plays a crucial role in ensuring the safe clearance of sections before authorizing the entry of another train, contributing to the overall safety of rail travel.
- Previously, the BPAC system was in operation up to Vashind railway station within the Kalyan-Igatpuri section.
- Following approval from the Railway Board, the Central Railway is extending BPAC operations from Khadavli to Igatpuri.
- The Mumbai Division of the Central Railway already has BPAC systems in place on various sections, including:
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Kalyan section
 - CSMT-PANVEL Harbour line
 - CSMT-Goregaon line
 - Kalyan-Karjat section
 - Vasai-Panvel-Roha section



BAN ON HALAL CERTIFICATION

The Uttar Pradesh government has ordered a state-wide ban on products being sold with halal certificates with immediate effect.

Halal is an Arabic word that loosely translates to 'permissible' in English. In the Quran, the term 'halal' is contrasted with the term 'haram' — meaning 'forbidden' — and is used to designate the categories of lawful (and allowed) and unlawful (and forbidden). The term is particularly associated with Islamic dietary laws and refers to food that is procured, processed, and traded in compliance with Islamic belief. The two items of food that are most commonly considered haram (non-halal) are pork (pig meat) and intoxicants (alcohol). Even meats that are not pork must satisfy specific requirements relating to their source, the way the animal was killed, and how it was processed to qualify as halal. Halal does not have to do with meat at all. So, vegetarian food would be generally considered permissible or 'halal', unless it contains alcohol.

India does not have an official regulator for the certification of halal products. Rather, there are various halal-certifying agencies that provide companies, products, or food establishments with halal certifications.



Important Days : National / International

National

Antyodaya Diwas



DATE: 25th September 2023

Antyodaya Diwas is celebrated annually on 25th September in India.

Key Points:

- It marks the birth anniversary of Indian leader Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya and is celebrated in his honour to remember his life and legacy.
- He was one of the most prominent personalities in the history of Indian politics.
- This year, the Antyodaya Diwas marks the 105th birth anniversary of Upadhyaya. He was the co-founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) thinker.

Sankalp Saptah



DATE: 29th September, 2023

The Prime Minister Modi is set to inaugurate a unique week-long initiative, 'Sankalp Saptah,' at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Key Points:

- It is linked to the effective implementation of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP).
- To implement the ABP and prepare an effective block development strategy, "chintan shivirs (brainstorming sessions)" were organized at village and block levels across the country.
- The Sankalp Saptah is the culmination of these chintan shivirs.
- Sankalp Saptah will be observed in all 500 aspirational blocks.
- Each day in Sankalp Saptah will be dedicated to a specific development theme on which all aspirational blocks will work.
- The themes for the first six days are "Sampoorna Swasthya", "Suposhit Parivar", "Swachhta", "Krishi", "Shiksha", and "Samridhi Diwas".
- ABP was launched on January 7, 2023, on the lines of the Aspirational District Programme that was launched in 2018 and covers 112 districts across the country.

Indian Air Force Day 2023



DATE: 8th October 2023

The Indian Air Force IAF is gearing up to celebrate its 91st Indian Air Force day on 8 October 2023 over the holy Sangam area of Prayagraj.

Key Points:

- This special day will be celebrated and displayed over the holy Sangam area of Prayagraj by the Indian Air Force flying its aircraft in the Luv Kush, Sugreev and a Bharat formation along with others.
- The celebration of Air Force day marks the participation of total number of 120 aircraft in the air display in Prayagraj.
- The Indian Air Force day 2023's motto is "Nabham Sparsham Deeptham" which means touch the sky with glory.

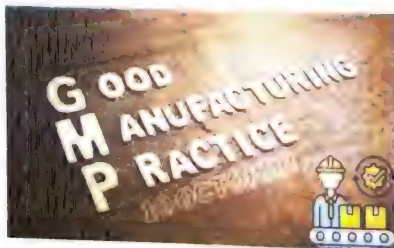
Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Day 2023

DATE: 9th October 2023

Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Day is an annual celebration held on October 9th.

Key Points:

- This special day honours the establishment of the Indian Foreign Service.
- Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Day is a momentous occasion to celebrate the establishment and enduring legacy of the IFS.
- It serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions made by diplomats and foreign service officers in promoting India's interests and fostering global cooperation.
- This day not only honours the past but also looks forward to a future where diplomacy continues to play a vital role in shaping India's international relationships.

Good Manufacturing Practice Day

DATE: 10th October, 2023

The Indian government, in partnership with the Indian Drugs Manufacturers' Association, will mark the first National Current Good Manufacturing Practice Day on October 10th.

Key Points:

- The initiative aims to underscore the importance of adhering to cGMP guidelines in pharmaceutical manufacturing, with a focus on improving product quality and ensuring patient safety.
- Good Manufacturing Practices, commonly referred to as cGMP, are stringent quality standards mandated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for pharmaceutical manufacturing.
- The guidelines serve as the backbone of pharmaceutical operations, providing essential standards to enhance product quality by regulating various aspects of the manufacturing process, including materials, methods, machinery, processes, personnel, facilities, and environmental conditions.

National Press Day

DATE: 14th November, 2023

National Press Day, marked on 16th November, holds immense significance in India as it marks the **establishment of the Press Council of India**, functioning as a guardian of journalistic ethics and freedom.

Key Points:

- The day commemorates the establishment of the **Press Council of India (PCI)**, which acts as a regulatory body for the news media in the country.
- It serves as a reminder of the crucial contribution of the press to the democratic fabric of India.
- National Press Day traces its roots to the establishment of the Press Council of India in 1966, underlining the historical and cultural importance of the press in democratic societies.

International

International Day of Sign Languages 2023



DATE: 23rd September, 2023

The United Nations General Assembly has designated September 23rd as the International Day of Sign Languages to raise awareness about the crucial role sign language plays in upholding the human rights.

Key Points:

- The concept of the International Day of Sign Languages was introduced by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).
- Sign language serves as a unifying tool, making it essential to acknowledge and commemorate this day.
- The theme for this year is "A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere!"

International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons 2023



DATE: 26th September, 2023

The United Nations observes 26th September every year as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Key Points:

- The aim of the day is to enhance public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination.

- It provides an opportunity to educate the public and their leaders about the real benefits of eliminating such weapons, and the social and economic costs of perpetuating them.

World Heart Day 2023



DATE: 29th September 2023

Every year on the 29th of September, people all around the world observe World Heart Day.

Key Points:

- The theme for the World Heart Day 2023 is "Use Heart, Know Heart."
- According to the World Heart Federation, conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels such as heart attacks, stroke and heart failure kill more than 20.5 million people every year.
- World Heart Day creates awareness about the importance of keeping a healthy heart via various global activities.

International Translation Day 2023



DATE: 30th September, 2023

International Translation Day, observed on September 30 every year, serves as a global celebration of the invaluable contributions made by translators and language professionals.

Key Points:

- The individuals play a pivotal role in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue, contributing to global development, and fostering world peace.
- International Translation Day was first established in 1991 by the International Federation of Translators (FIT).
- FIT is a collective organization representing translators, interpreters, and terminologists worldwide founded in 1953.
- The theme for International Translation Day 2023 is 'Translation unveils the many faces of humanity.'

World Mental Health Day 2023**DATE:** 10th October 2023

World Mental Health Day on October 10th is a global initiative that brings organizations and individuals together to commemorate the importance of mental well-being.

Key points:

- World Mental Health Day 2023 provides a platform for individuals and communities to unite under the theme "Mental health is a universal human right."
- Good mental health is integral to overall well-being, impacting physical health, social connections, and livelihoods.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to collaborate with its partners to promote and protect mental health as a basic human right.

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023**DATE:** 13th October 2023

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction sheds light on both natural and man-made disasters and emphasizes the importance of preventive measures.

Key Points:

- The theme of UN International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 is "Fighting inequality for a resilient future."
- The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction was started in 1989, after a call by the United Nations General Assembly for a day to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction.

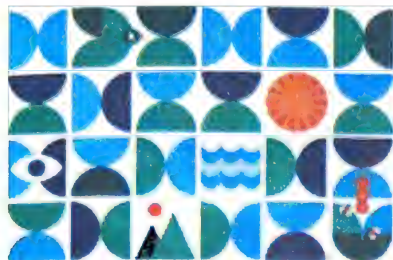
United Nations day 2023**UNITED NATIONS****DATE:** 24th October, 2023

Recently, the World has celebrated the 78th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) on 24th October 2023.

Key Points:

- The United Nations day 2023 theme is emphasizing on commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), under the overarching theme of "Equality, Freedom, and Justice for All."
- The United Nations finally came into existence on October 24, 1945, after being ratified by 51 nations, which included five permanent members (France, the Republic of China, the Soviet Union, the UK and the US) and 46 other signatories.
- At the time of formation, the UN had 5 permanent members with a total of 51 members, presently, it has 193 members but permanent members in the UN General Assembly are still 5.
- India is one of the founding members of the UN.
- India has been elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for two years in January 2021.
- The UN has 6 components which were established in 1945 such as the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, UN Secretariat.

International Biosphere Reserve Day 2023



3 November

International Day for Biosphere Reserves

DATE: 3rd November, 2023

The second anniversary of International Biosphere Reserve Day, celebrated on November 3, annually highlights the critical importance of biosphere reserves (BR) in safeguarding our environment and promoting sustainability.

Key Points:

- The SACAM event, themed "Ridge to Reef," facilitated collaboration on sustainable environmental practices in South and Central Asia.
- This day celebrates the role of biosphere reserves in conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable development.
- It aims to raise awareness, share best practices, and showcase achievements of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

World AMR Awareness Week 2023



DATE: 21st November, 2023

The World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week is taking place from November 18 to 24, 2023, with the theme 'Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together.'

Key Points:

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant threat to humans, animals, plants, and the environment, impacting all facets of our interconnected world.
- The chosen theme for WAAW 2023 will stay consistent with the previous year – "Preventing

Antimicrobial Resistance Together," just as it was in 2022.

- The fight against AMR necessitates collaboration across regions and sectors.
- Cooperation should involve not only medical professionals and patients but also hospitals, wastewater plants, and pharmaceutical producers.

Lachit Diwas



DATE: 23rd November 2023

Lachit Divas (Lachit Day) in Assam to remember the heroic act of Lachit Borphukan and the Assamese army's great victory over the Mughal troops in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.

Key Points:

- The Battle of Saraighat was fought between the Mughal Empire led by the Kachwaka King and Raja Ram Singh I and the Ahom Kingdom led by Lachit Borphukan in 1671.
- The naval battle was fought on the Brahmaputra River at Saraighat, located in present-day Guwahati, Assam.
- The Battle of Saraighat was a significant turning point in history.
- It was the last attempt by the Mughal Empire to capture Guwahati and extend into Assam and Mughals lost to the Ahom Kingdom.

Samvidhan Divas



DATE: 26th November 2023

Samvidhan Divas in India, to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1949.

Key Points:

- Constitution Day previously known as “National Law Day”, is celebrated in India on 26 November every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.
- On November 19, 2015, the government of India with the help of a gazette notification declared November 26 as the Constitution Day.

World AIDS Day

DATE: 1st December 2023

The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges and celebrates the invaluable contributions of communities in leading the fight against HIV.



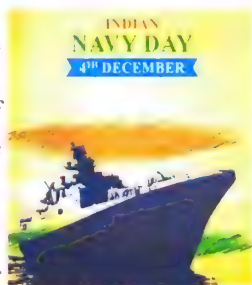
Key Points:

- Since its inception in 1988, the inaugural World AIDS Day aimed to globally raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and honour the lives lost to this devastating illness.
- Theme of World AIDS Day 2023 “Let Communities Lead.”
- World AIDS Day 2023 is a moment for WHO to celebrate and acknowledge the priceless contributions of communities, highlighting their pivotal position in steering the efforts against HIV.

Indian Navy Day

DATE: 4th December 2023

Indian Navy Day, celebrated annually on December 4th, commemorates the success of “Operation Trident” during the 1971 Indo-Pak War.



Key Points:

- The focal theme for Indian Navy Day 2023 is “Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain.”
- This day pays tribute to the gallant sailors who have served and continue to serve the nation, acknowledging their sacrifices.
- Significance of Indian Navy Day
 - Honoring Sacrifices
 - Historical Commemoration
 - National Security Reflection
 - Paying Tribute

- Public Awareness
- Unity and Patriotism

Human Rights Day

DATE: 10th December 2023

Human rights day marks the 75th anniversary of a monumental global commitment—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).



Key Points:

- The human rights day 2023 theme celebrations is “Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All.”
- In commemoration of the 75th anniversary, a year-long initiative is underway, focusing on the themes of universality, progress and engagement.
- This initiative seeks to celebrate the achievements of the UDHR and pave the way for a vision for the future of human rights.
- The culminating event in December 2023 will unveil global pledges and ideas aimed at advancing the cause of human rights.

UNICEF Day

DATE: 11th December 2023

UNICEF Foundation Day or UNICEF Day observed each year, marks the creation of UNICEF by the UN General Assembly in 1946.



Key Points:

- After World War II in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly decided to look after and protect children’s lives across the world and formed an emergency fund.
- In 1953, this fund came under the management of the UN and thus became a separate organization called UNICEF.
- On UNICEF day thousands of UNICEF associates across the world renewed their pledges to work to uplift the condition of underprivileged children of the World.
- The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund is an aid group that saves children’s lives by providing them with humanitarian aid across the world.



Fact Sheets : PIB

EXERCISE SAMPRITI

DATE: 3rd October 2023

Sampriti is the annual bilateral military exercise conducted between India and Bangladesh and hosted alternatively by both countries. The eleventh edition of the exercise was held in Meghalaya this year.

It will take place from 3rd Oct – 15th Oct 2023 at Umroi Cantonment, Meghalaya

Key Points:

- The first edition of the exercise was held in Jorhat, Assam in 2009.
- In Sampriti-IX, Command Post Exercise (CPX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX) were conducted
 - CPX – It is a military exercise focussing on the battle-readiness of troops emphasising on stipulated events.
 - FTX – It is a military exercise that involves training, drills and other exercises by military units for defence enhancement purpose
- Through the FTX curriculum, troops of both the countries' armies get familiar with each other's organizational structure and tactical drills
- In addition to defence corporation, Sampriti exercise also promotes trust building and friendship between two nations,
- The exercise usually culminates into a final validation exercise where both the troops practice a Counter-Terrorism operation in a controlled environment

MEERA YUVA BHARAT

DATE: 11th October 2023

An autonomous body called as "Mera Yuva Bharat" was approved and established by the cabinet. The primary objective of this body will be to serve for Youth development; specifically the age group of 15-29 years.

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) is 'Phygital Platform' (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.

Key Points:

- Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' is envisioned as a pivotal, technology-driven facilitator for youth development and youth-led development.
- The overarching goal of providing equitable opportunities to empower the youth in realizing their aspirations and contributing to the creation of a "Viksit Bharat" (developed India), across the entire spectrum of the Government.
- It envisions a framework where the youth of our country can seamlessly connect with programs, mentors, and their local communities.
- This engagement is designed to deepen their understanding of local issues and empower them to contribute to constructive solutions.



Objectives of Mera Yuva Bharat

GLOBAL MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT 2023

DATE: 17th October 2023

The Global Maritime India Summit was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 17th October. Here, he also unveiled 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047', a blueprint for the Indian maritime blue economy.

Key Points:

- In the given event, maritime projects worth Rs 23,000 crores were established
- Foundation stone for Tuna Tekra Deep draft terminal at Deendayal Port Authority, Gujarat was also laid.
- Business leaders, investors and other stakeholders are also participating in the summit.
- The three-day summit will discuss and deliberate on key issues of the maritime sector including ports of the future; decarbonisation; coastal shipping and inland water transportation; shipbuilding; repair and recycling; finance, insurance & arbitration; maritime clusters; innovation & technology; maritime safety and security; and maritime tourism, among others.

INDIA'S FIRST REGIONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (RRTS)

DATE: 20th October 2023

RRTS is a new rail-based, semi-high-speed, high-frequency commuter transit system. With a design speed of 180 Kmph, RRTS is a transformational, regional development initiative, which is designed to provide high-speed trains for intercity commuting every 15 minutes, which can go up to a frequency of every 5 minutes as per requirement.

Key Points:

- A total of eight RRTS corridors have been identified to be developed in NCR, out of which three corridors have been prioritised to be implemented in Phase-I including Delhi – Ghaziabad – Meerut Corridor; Delhi – Gurugram – SNB – Alwar Corridor; and Delhi – Panipat Corridor.
- The 17 Km priority section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor will connect Sahibabad to 'Duhai Depot' with stations at Ghaziabad, Guldhar and Duhai on the way.
- RRTS being developed in the country is a state-of-the-art regional mobility solution and is comparable to the best in the world. It will provide safe, reliable

and modern intercity commuting solutions in the country.

- In line with PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the RRTS network will have extensive multi-modal integration with Railway stations, Metro stations, Bus services etc.

NATIONAL COAL INDEX

DATE: 7th November 2023

The NCI is a price index which reflects the change in the price level of coal on a particular month relative to the fixed base year. The base year for the NCI is FY 2017-18.

Key Points:

- NCI is composed of a set of five sub-indices: three for Non-Coking Coal and two for Coking Coal.
- The three sub-indices for Non Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Non Coking Coal and the two sub-indices for Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Coking Coal.
- Thus, indices are separate for Non-coking and Coking Coal
- The amount of revenue share per tonne of coal produced from auctioned blocks would be arrived at using the NCI by means of a defined formula.
- Prices of coal from all the sales channels of coal, including import, as existing today are taken into account for compiling the NCI.

CORPAT & EX- BONGOSAGAR

DATE: 10th November 2023

The 4th edition of BONGOSAGAR-23, the bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and the Bangladesh Navy and the 5th edition of Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) by the two navies were conducted in the Northern Bay of Bengal in November 2023 for two days.

Key Points:

- Indian Navy Ships Kuthar, Kiltan and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) Dornier participated in the exercise along with Bangladesh Navy Ships Abu Bakr, Abu Ubaidah and MPA
- The ships undertook communication drills, surface gun-shoots, tactical manoeuvres and other exercises that culminated with a steam past.
- INS Kuthar is an indigenously built guided-missile Corvette.
- INS Kiltan is an indigenously built anti-submarine Corvette.

- Both navies undertook joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and subsequently conducted maritime exercises to enhance interoperability.

WOAH- WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

DATE: 13th November 2023

A multi-sectoral workshop on Risk-based management of spill over events in wildlife in India" was organised by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India, in partnership with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Key Points:

- The workshop focused on four key objectives on enhancing stakeholder knowledge about wildlife-origin disease risk analysis, conducting a thorough gap analysis of India's risk assessment and management, simulating disease spillover scenarios, and fostering communication and awareness among relevant stakeholders.
- The workshop concluded with discussions on the way forward, emphasizing the importance of a One Health approach, cross-sectoral collaboration, and pandemic preparedness.
- The workshop comprised seven sessions, including two dedicated to risk analysis simulations (one for disease X and one specific to India).

- The culmination of the two-day workshop saw intensive discussions on the path forward, highlighting the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and the adoption of a One Health approach to ensure a safer and more sustainable future for wildlife, ecosystems, and human and domestic animal health.

YANTRA PLATFORM

DATE: 25th November 2023

Yoga and Ayurveda in Neurosciences, Therapeutics and Research Approaches (YANTRA), 2023 held at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in association with Jignasa.

Key points:

- YANTRA is a platform, championed by NIMHANS along with Jignasa, to reinforce and rekindle the effectiveness of Ayush system of medicine in curing as well as enriching the quality of lives of the people.
- With an objective to revitalise the Ayush system of medicine, be it Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Sowa Rigpa or Homoeopathy.
- This platform has a focus approach to make Ayush systems as mainstream in Public Health and Primary Healthcare to fulfil the Universal Health Coverage goal set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).



LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEM (LAWS)

The UN General Assembly recently voted on a resolution regarding lethal autonomous weapons, which received overwhelming support, with 164 countries in favour, five against, and eight abstentions. The UN urged the international community to address the challenges posed by autonomous weapons through this resolution.

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) are a type of military technology that can make decisions about the use of lethal force without direct human intervention generally referred to as "killer robots."

LAWS are designed to operate without continuous human control. These systems use artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies to identify and engage targets and make decisions. They may operate in the air, on land, on water, underwater, or in space.

LAWS could have potential advantages, such as faster decision-making, reduced human casualties, and improved precision in targeting.

But, LAWS are also controversial and raise ethical, legal and humanitarian concerns like no accountability, non-compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law, subject to errors, failures, and vulnerabilities that could compromise their reliability, safety, and security, etc.



Important Supreme Court Judgements

APPOINTMENTS IN TN TEMPLES

DATE: 30th September 2023

The Supreme Court of India recently issued an order to maintain the status quo regarding the appointment of archakas (priests) in Tamil Nadu temples governed by the Agamic tradition.

Key Points:

- This decision came in response to a writ petition filed by the 'SrirangamKoilMirasKainkaryapara galMatrumAthana iSarnthaKoilgalinMiraskainkaryaparargalinNalasangam,' an association of archakas.
- The bench of Justices AS Bopanna issued the notice on the writ petition and stated that "in the meantime, the status quo relating to archakaship in Agamic temples in question shall be continued in the same manner until further orders."
- The petition sought the court's intervention to quash the Tamil Nadu Government's orders dated July 27, 2023, and the Government letter of August 28, 2023. These orders attempted to alter the hereditary scheme of appointing archakas from a particular denomination in Agama temples.
- The government aimed to open these appointments to individuals from other denominations that had completed a one-year certificate course for archakas in government-run schools.

THE NEED FOR A RELIABLE CODE OF POLICE INVESTIGATION IN INDIA

DATE: 12th October 2023

In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court (SC) of India stressed the necessity for a "consistent and dependable code of investigation" to prevent legal loopholes leading to the acquittal (found not guilty of a crime or wrongdoing) of the guilty.

Key Points:

- The observations came after the court acquitted 3 accused in a 2013 kidnap and murder case, citing flaws in the police investigation.
- The court highlighted the 2003 report by Justice V.S. Malimath Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System, which emphasised that the "successful prosecution of the guilty depends on a thorough and careful search for truth and collection of evidence which is both admissible and probative".
- The court referred to a Law Commission of India report in 2012 that the reasons for a low rate of conviction included "inept, unscientific investigation by the police and lack of proper coordination between police and prosecution machinery."

SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN INDIA

DATE: 16th October 2023

Recently, The Supreme Court has delivered its long awaited verdict rejecting petitions to legalise same-sex marriage and delved deeper on the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 to examine the issue thoroughly, which have convergence and interrelationship with homosexuality.

Key Points:

- A five-judge Constitution Bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of India ruled in a 3:2 verdict against giving constitutional validity to same-sex marriages.
- The CJI, in his opinion, concludes that the court can neither strike down or read words into the Special Marriage Act (SMA) 1954 to include same sex members within the ambit of the SMA 1954. The top court said it is for Parliament and state Legislature to formulate laws on it.

- However, at the same time, the SC says the relationship of marriage is not a static one. SC holds that queer persons have an equal right and freedom to enter into a "union".
- All five judges on the Bench agreed that there is no fundamental right to marry under the Constitution.

SUPREME COURT RULING ON TELECOM COMPANIES' EXPENSES AND TAXATION

DATE: 19th October 2023

In a significant decision, the Supreme Court of India has ruled that the payment of entry fees and variable annual license fees made by telecom companies will be considered capital expenditure rather than revenue expenditure for tax purposes.

Key Points:

- The SC's judgment stipulates that the payments made by telecom companies to the Department of Telecommunication as entry fees and annual license fees under the (New Telecom) Policy of 1999 are now categorized as capital expenditures and may be amortised in accordance with Section 35ABB of the (Income Tax) Act.
- This means that instead of deducting the entire expenditure all at once, the company will need to deduct a portion of the total fee over each year for tax purposes.

COMPENSATION FOR SEWER DEATHS AND DISABILITIES

DATE: 22nd October 2023

In a significant move, the Supreme Court of India has taken a strong stance on the issue of sewer deaths in the country.

Key Points:

- The court has ruled that government authorities must pay compensation to the families of those who lose their lives while cleaning sewers.
- The compensation amount has been set at ₹30 lakh for the kin of the deceased and ₹20 lakh for those who suffer permanent disabilities due to sewer cleaning.
- Additionally, if a cleaner sustains other disabilities, they will be entitled to receive up to Rs 10 lakh in compensation.
- The Supreme Court has emphasized the need for both Union and state governments to work towards the complete eradication of manual scavenging. This directive is aimed at preventing such tragic incidents from occurring in the future.



HARYANA'S 75% RESERVATION LAW IN PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS

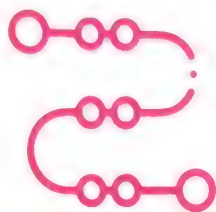
The state government of Haryana passed the Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020, in March 2021. The law provided for 75% reservation for local candidates in private sector jobs with a monthly salary of less than Rs 30,000 for 10 years.

The law was aimed at providing employment opportunities and skill development for the local youth, especially the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and to reduce the influx of migrants from other states.

Haryana wanted to create reservations in the private sector by introducing a policy of "sons of the soil," which was an infringement of the constitutional rights of employers. The law violated the federal structure of the Constitution, acting contrary to the public interest and benefiting only one class.

But, the High court ruled the law and said that the law violated the fundamental right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution, as the law discriminated against the citizens and employers based on place of birth and residence.

The law also violated the fundamental right to freedom of trade and commerce under Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution, as it imposed unreasonable restrictions on the employers to hire local candidates, irrespective of their merit and suitability.



Timeline-National

SEPTEMBER 2023

24th September, 2023	India is on the cusp of a significant demographic shift, as revealed by the India Ageing Report 2023, jointly released by the International Institute for Population Sciences and the United Nations Population Fund.
27 th September, 2023	Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, has achieved a remarkable feat by attaining 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus status across its 95,767 villages.
30 th September, 2023	The upcoming Noida International Airport (NIA) in Jewar has received its own unique international three-letter code, 'DXN,' from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

OCTOBER 2023

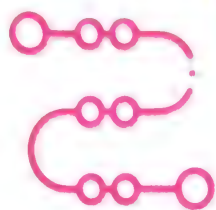
1st October 2023	The Indian Air Force (IAF) has put forth a proposal to procure three airborne intelligence gathering aircraft as part of an ambitious project focused on developing indigenous sensor technologies and systems.
4 th October, 2023	The Delhi government has taken a significant step in the fight against air pollution by launching a 'green war room'.
7 th October, 2023	Punjab, one of India's prominent states, is grappling with a severe financial crisis, burdened by mounting debt and escalating interest payments.
8 th October, 2023	In a tragic incident, the South Lhonak Lake in Sikkim experienced a breach, leading to severe flooding in downstream areas.
9 th October, 2023	The Bihar government has taken a significant step by announcing a 10% reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the state's judicial services and government-run law colleges and universities.
11 th October, 2023	The Indian government has officially constituted the National Turmeric Board (NTB) to support the development and growth of the turmeric and turmeric product industry in the country.
13 th October, 2023	RBI has established a nine-member working group to propose a framework for a smoother transition to the expected credit loss-based provisioning system (ECL).
14 th October, 2023	The Union Cabinet, has given its approval for tenancy regulations in three Union territories – Andaman and Nicobar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.
17 th October, 2023	Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann recently announced the ban on the cultivation of the PUSA-44 paddy variety in the state, effective from the next year.
18 th October, 2023	The Central government has named the Telangana tribal university after Sammakka-Sarakka, a revered mother-daughter duo among the local tribal community in Telangana.

19 th October, 2023	The Union Home Ministry has announced a five-year ban on the 'Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party' (JKDFP) due to its anti-India and pro-Pakistan activities.
20 th October, 2023	The Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) in India has issued an interim ruling stating that over-the-top (OTT) platforms, such as Hotstar, do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
21 st October, 2023	The Territorial Army has recently added a batch of five Mandarin language experts to its ranks.
22 nd October, 2023	The Indian Navy has recently implemented a ground-breaking '360 Degree Appraisal Mechanism' for its promotion boards.
23 rd October, 2023	In a remarkable achievement, ImmunoACT, backed by IIT-B and Laurus Labs, has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) for India's first CAR-T cell therapy, NexCAR19.
24 th October, 2023	In a move to promote environmental sustainability, the Indian Government has introduced a national Green Credit programme.
25 th October, 2023	After extensive research, the India AI program has produced its inaugural report, which outlines a comprehensive roadmap for the development of India's artificial intelligence (AI) ecosystem.
26 th October, 2023	The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) have released its Economic Outlook Survey for India, projecting key economic indicators for the fiscal year 2023-24.
28 th October, 2023	India's horticulture production has seen a steady annual increase, rising by 1.37% to reach 351.92 million tonnes in the fiscal year 2022-23.
29 th October, 2023	Cotton farmers in North Indian states, including Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan, are grappling with a severe pink bollworm (PBW) infestation that is pushing them to the brink of suicide.
30 th October, 2023	Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) has delivered INS Imphal, the third ship of the Project 15B Class of stealth guided missile destroyers, to the Indian Navy, four months ahead of schedule.
31 st October, 2023	The rare Paintbrush Swift butterfly, a species uncommon in the western Himalayas, has been sighted and documented for the first time in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district.
NOVEMBER 2023	
1 st November, 2023	The Agartala-Akhaura cross-border rail link project, set to significantly boost cross-border trade and connectivity, recently completed its successful trial run.
3 rd November, 2023	The Indian Air Force's No. 4 Squadron, based in Rajasthan, and is undergoing a historic transition as it replaces its MiG-21 Bison aircraft with Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft.
4 th November, 2023	In a significant recognition of their contributions to literature and music, Kozhikode in Kerala and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh have been added to UNESCO's prestigious list of Creative Cities.
6 th November, 2023	Scorpion envenomation is a life-threatening problem in many parts of the world, and the Indian red scorpion (Mesobuthustamulus) is among the most dangerous scorpions globally.

7 th November, 2023	The Central Railway has introduced the Block Proving by Axle Counter (BPAC) system in the Vasind-Asangaon section of the Mumbai Division, further enhancing safety in train operations.
9 th November, 2023	The draft State Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Kerala holds promising prospects for significant energy savings by 2030.
11 th November, 2023	In 2022, Indian farmers experienced implicit taxation totaling \$169 billion as a result of export bans, duties, and permits on various commodities such as wheat and rice.
12 th November, 2023	The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the introduction of two significant surveys, the 'Inflation Expectations Survey of Households' and the 'Consumer Confidence Survey,' aimed at providing valuable inputs for its bi-monthly monetary policy decisions.
13 th November, 2023	Jharkhand government launched a special campaign named "AbuaBirDishomAbhiyan" with the goal of providing land title certificates to individuals and communities under the Forest Rights Act.
15 th November, 2023	The night sky observatories of Hanle and Merak in Ladakh recently witnessed a spectacular and rare event—a bright red aurora.
16 th November, 2023	The Indian government has introduced revised rules for various small savings schemes, including the Senior Citizen's Savings Scheme and the Public Provident Fund (PPF).
18 th November, 2023	The ninth edition of the Joint Military exercise "Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023" has officially commenced in Aundh (Pune).
19 th November, 2023	The 37th Infantry Commanders' Conference, a two-day event, concluded successfully at the Infantry School in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh.
21 st November, 2023	The Uttar Pradesh government has initiated the Safe City Project, a comprehensive surveillance initiative aimed at bolstering security.
22 nd November, 2023	A collaborative military exercise between the special forces of India and the United States, named 'Vajra Prahar 2023,' has commenced at Meghalaya's Umroi Cantonment.
23 rd November, 2023	India is actively developing sea protocols for the export of various fresh fruits and vegetables like bananas, mangoes, pomegranates, and jackfruit.
24 th November, 2023	Continuous warm temperatures in Assam have been identified as a key factor behind a severe pest infestation that has wreaked havoc on approximately 28,000 hectares of paddy crops across at least 15 districts.
25 th November, 2023	In a ground-breaking discovery, scientists have identified a new species of 'music frog' in the lush landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh.
26 th November, 2023	In a significant move, the Gujarat government has selected the ghol as its official state fish, emphasizing both its economic importance and distinctiveness.
28 th November, 2023	Girish Chandra Murmu, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, has achieved a significant position by being elected as the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of External Auditors.
30 th November, 2023	Indian comedian Vir Das has achieved a milestone by winning an International Emmy Award for his Netflix show, "Vir Das: Landing on Monday."

DECEMBER 2023

1 st December, 2023	Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 40th Coast Guard Commanders' Conference in New Delhi, emphasizing the crucial role of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in enhancing coastal defences and maritime capabilities.
2 nd December, 2023	At Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, the Indian Navy witnessed the launch of the first three ships of the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Shallow Water Craft (SWC) project.
3 rd December, 2023	The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has officially notified the reconstitution of the High-Powered Committee (HPC) tasked with addressing the concerns of the Ladakh region.
4 th December, 2023	The Centre, led by a high-level committee headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has approved a recovery and reconstruction plan for Joshimath in Uttarakhand.
5 th December, 2023	Kanchan Devi, a 1991-batch Indian Forest Service Officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research Education (ICFRE).
6 th December, 2023	The Supreme Court has intervened in the ongoing impasse between the Tamil Nadu Governor, R N Ravi and Chief Minister M K Stalin over the delay in clearing Bills sent by the Assembly.
8 th December, 2023	The Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Department of Defence Production, has achieved a significant milestone by signing its 300th contract.
9 th December, 2023	The SAMRIDHI Conclave, inaugurated by Shri Banwarilal Purohit, Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh.
10 th December, 2023	The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) serves as a multi-stakeholder platform, bringing together representatives from diverse groups on an equal footing to deliberate on public policy issues related to the Internet.
11 th December, 2023	Sandhayak, Yard 3025, the inaugural vessel among the four Survey Vessel (Large) ships, has been successfully delivered to the Indian Navy.
12 th December, 2023	Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and unveiled a grand statue of the 17th-century Maratha king at Sindhugarh, Maharashtra's coastal fort.
13 th December, 2023	In a strategic move to enhance spatial planning at the Gram Panchayat level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj introduced the Geographic Information System (GIS) application known as "Gram Manchitra".
14 th December 2023	Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha.
15 th December 2023	Supreme Court declined to stay an order by the Allahabad High Court permitting a survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura.
17 th December 2023	Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), touted as the world's largest office space in a single project.
18 th December 2023	The Manipur Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Manipur State Beverages Corporation Limited (MSBCL), marking the end of a prohibition that lasted over 30 years.
19 th December 2023	India has achieved a remarkable milestone in its polar research pursuits with the launch of its inaugural winter expedition to the Arctic.
20 th December 2023	According to the latest report from the World Bank, India is set to become the largest recipient of remittances, with inflows expected to increase by 12.4% to \$125 billion in 2023, constituting 3.4% of the country's gross domestic product.



Timeline- International

SEPTEMBER 2023

25th September, 2023	A new report by Mercy Corps, a global humanitarian aid organization, warns that disruptions in the Black Sea grain route could exacerbate food insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions.
27th September, 2023	A recent report published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations highlights the significant impact of methane emissions from ruminant livestock and rice paddies on the environment.
28th September, 2023	The UK is undertaking a groundbreaking project to create the world's most powerful laser, called "Vulcan 20-20," with an £85 million investment from the UK Science and Technology Facilities Council.
30th September, 2023	Researchers at the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) conducted an experiment with antimatter, demonstrating that it responds to gravity by falling, consistent with the behaviour of ordinary matter, aligning with Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity.

OCTOBER 2023

3rd October, 2023	India and Bangladesh have kicked off the 11th edition of their annual joint military exercise, SAMPRITI, on October 3, 2023, in Umroi, Meghalaya.
4th October, 2023	A recent study published in Science Advances reveals how pollen grains can provide valuable insights into the migration of early humans from Africa to Europe and Asia.
5th October, 2023	A recent study, published in the journal Global Ecology and Biogeography, has examined the seasonal elevational shifts of 302 Himalayan bird species, revealing that the majority of these birds migrate downslope during the winter.
5th October, 2023	A new report titled "Diabetes Global Industry Overview 2023" sheds light on the staggering impact of diabetes on global health and healthcare expenditure.
6th October, 2023	The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued its first fine related to space debris rule violations.
7th October, 2023	The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has raised India's economic growth forecast for 2023 to 6.6%, up from the 6% predicted earlier.
9th October, 2023	A study recently published in the journal Science estimates that approximately 23 million people worldwide live on floodplains contaminated by toxic waste from metal mining activity.
11th October, 2023	Russia's envoy to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Mikhail Ulyanov, has announced that Russia intends to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

13 th October, 2023	Hydrilla, an invasive aquatic plant known for its rapid growth and harmful effects on ecosystems, has been found in Michigan, US, for the first time.
14 th October, 2023	A report titled "Mental Health of Refugees and Migrants: Risk and Protective Factors and Access to Care" was released recently by WHO.
15 th October, 2023	Recently, Microsoft successfully concluded its \$69 billion acquisition of the video game behemoth, Activision Blizzard, marking the largest consumer tech acquisition since AOL acquired Time Warner over two decades ago.
16 th October, 2023	In a remarkable display of skill and resilience, the Indian Army clinched the gold medal at the Cambrian Patrol Competition 2023, an international military exercise held in Wales, UK.
17 th October, 2023	The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), operating under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has joined forces with Coca-Cola India to launch the 'Super Power Retailer Programme.
19 th October, 2023	A new paper by the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) warns that the decline in global poverty is anticipated to be slower than previously estimated.
20 th October, 2023	A piece of rock bearing mysterious markings, known as the Saint-Belec slab, which lay largely unstudied for 4,000 years, has become a vital tool for archaeologists in north-western France.
21 st October, 2023	The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has successfully eliminated lymphatic filariasis (LF), marking its second neglected tropical disease (NTD) elimination in just six years.
23 rd October, 2023	Astronomers using the James Webb Space Telescope have made a remarkable discovery in the atmosphere of the exoplanet WASP-17b, located approximately 1,300 light-years away from Earth.
24 th October, 2023	In a groundbreaking scientific endeavor, China is constructing the world's largest "ghost particle" detector, the Tropical Deep-sea Neutrino Telescope (TRIDENT), also known as "Hai ling" or "Ocean Bell" in Chinese.
26 th October, 2023	The government of Peru has introduced strict penalties for cellphone thieves, including the possibility of life imprisonment if the theft results in the death of a victim.
27 th October, 2023	Johnson & Johnson has unveiled promising results from a trial of its experimental pill for dengue fever, a disease that currently lacks specific treatments.
28 th October, 2023	A study conducted by the US Geological Survey (USGS) has revealed a concerning trend of rising salinity in groundwater across the United States.
29 th October, 2023	Recently, South Korea, the United States, and Japan conducted their first-ever joint aerial exercises aimed at bolstering defense cooperation and preparedness against the increasing missile and nuclear threats posed by North Korea.
30 th October, 2023	In a remarkable scientific revelation, researchers have unearthed the remnants of an ancient tectonic plate in Southeast Asia that had vanished from the geological records for over 20 million years.
31 st October, 2023	The Sri Lankan Cabinet has approved a groundbreaking initiative to issue free visas to visitors from India, China, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, and Thailand.

NOVEMBER 2023

1 st November, 2023	The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced a capital infusion of \$35 million for its Global Solar Facility (GSF), aimed at stimulating solar investments in underserved regions, particularly in Africa.
3 rd November, 2023	In a significant milestone for animal welfare and public health, Bhutan has become the world's first country to successfully sterilize and vaccinate its entire stray dog population.
4 th November, 2023	According to the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), approximately one billion people worldwide lack legal identity.
6 th November, 2023	Chinese paleontologists have unearthed two remarkable species of lamprey from 160-million-year-old fossils in North China.
7 th November, 2023	The year 2023 is predicted to be the hottest year in the last 125,000 years, as stated by European Union scientists.
9 th November, 2023	Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia have been grappling with a dire humanitarian crisis as they face one of the worst floods in decades.
10 th November, 2023	The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given its approval to Valneva's single-shot vaccine, known as Ixchiq, for individuals aged 18 and older who face an increased risk of exposure to the chikungunya virus.
11 th November, 2023	A new report reveals that climate change has made the three-year extreme drought in Syria, Iraq, and Iran significantly more likely.
12 th November, 2023	Chinese scientists have achieved a significant milestone in the realm of genetic research by creating a monkey chimera with two sets of DNA.
13 th November, 2023	South Africa has achieved a significant milestone in the realm of family and parental rights as it becomes the first country in Africa to introduce shared parental leave.
14 th November, 2023	The U.S. Air Force's highly anticipated B-21 "Raider" bomber, with its distinctive flying wing design, successfully completed its inaugural flight on a historic day at the Air Force's Plant 42 in Palmdale, California.
15 th November, 2023	A "lost" rare mammal with a bizarre appearance has been rediscovered in a remote part of Indonesia, delighting scientists who feared it may be extinct.
17 th November, 2023	A state of emergency was declared in Iceland after powerful earthquakes rocked the Reykjanes peninsula, signaling a possible volcanic eruption could occur within days.
18 th November, 2023	The World Bank has recently approved a substantial financial assistance package of USD 150 million to bolster Sri Lanka's financial and institutional sectors.
21 st November, 2023	The tiny Caribbean island of Dominica is making history by establishing the world's first marine protected area dedicated to safeguarding the endangered sperm whale.
22 nd November, 2023	Scientists in California have made a significant breakthrough by discovering a 'kill switch' that triggers the death of cancer cells.
23 rd November, 2023	India, the United States, and 12 other members of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) have successfully concluded negotiations on the IPEF Clean Economy Agreement and the IPEF Fair Economy Agreement.
25 th November, 2023	Loneliness has been officially recognized as a critical global health threat by the World Health Organization (WHO), with a mortality impact equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
26 th November, 2023	The United States and China jointly announced a ground-breaking climate agreement recently.
27 th November, 2023	The United States and the Philippines signed a landmark deal allowing Washington to export nuclear technology and materials to Manila.
28 th November, 2023	The Cambridge Dictionary has chosen "hallucinate" as its Word of the Year for 2023.

29 th November, 2023	The Nordic Baltic Eight (NB8), consisting of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden, stands as an innovation and technological powerhouse.
30 th November, 2023	A new study reveals alarming changes in the Antarctic ozone hole, indicating not only a significant increase in size but also a concerning thinning trend during most of the spring.
DECEMBER 2023	
1 st December, 2023	India led South and Southeast Asia in recorded malaria cases in 2022, comprising 66% of the 5.2 million cases reported in the region, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).
2 nd December, 2023	In a remarkable turn of events, two kiwi chicks have hatched in the wild near New Zealand's capital, Wellington, marking a historic moment after over a century.
3 rd December, 2023	The United States has delivered a strong message to Israel, indicating its intention to impose visa bans on Israeli extremist settlers involved in violence against Palestinian civilians in the occupied West Bank.
4 th December, 2023	India has achieved a significant milestone by being unanimously elected as a member representing the Asian region in the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).
5 th December, 2023	India achieved a significant milestone by being re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council for the 2024–25 biennium.
6 th December, 2023	A new strain of bacterial pneumonia, commonly referred to as 'White Lung Syndrome,' is causing concern in various countries, including China, Denmark, the United States, and the Netherlands.
8 th December, 2023	The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is grappling with a severe monkeypox outbreak, with WHO reporting a staggering 12,569 suspected cases and 581 deaths.
9 th December, 2023	The 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) witnessed a significant development as 123 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and the European Union, signed the Declaration on Climate and Health.
10 th December, 2023	According to an international research team, carbon emissions in India are expected to rise by 8.2 percent in 2023, while China is projected to see a 4 percent increase.
11 th December, 2023	After much anticipation and a bit of delay, Google has officially launched its latest AI system, named Gemini.
12 th December, 2023	The WHO has called on countries to raise taxes on alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), noting that a majority of countries do not incentivize healthier behaviors.
13 th December, 2023	Italy has officially withdrawn from China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, marking the end of its participation more than four years after becoming the only G7 nation to sign up.
14 th December 2023	Barracuda, India's fastest solar-electric boat, was ceremoniously launched at the Navgathi Panavally Yard in Alappuzha.
15 th December 2023	Supreme Court declined to stay an order by the Allahabad High Court permitting a survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura.
17 th December 2023	Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), touted as the world's largest office space in a single project.
18 th December 2023	The Manipur Cabinet has approved the establishment of the Manipur State Beverages Corporation Limited (MSBCL), marking the end of a prohibition that lasted over 30 years.
19 th December 2023	India has achieved a remarkable milestone in its polar research pursuits with the launch of its inaugural winter expedition to the Arctic.
20 th December 2023	According to the latest report from the World Bank, India is set to become the largest recipient of remittances, with inflows expected to increase by 12.4% to \$125 billion in 2023, constituting 3.4% of the country's gross domestic product.

NET NEUTRALITY

Net Neutrality in India (Significance, Regulatory Status, Arguments in Favour & Against Net Neutrality)



Net neutrality advocates for equal treatment of all internet traffic, preventing any preferential treatment for specific websites, services, or applications. In India, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), representing major telecom providers Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, and Reliance Jio, has sparked a net neutrality dispute by urging platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp to contribute a share of their earnings to address network costs.

Net Neutrality		
No Blocking	No Trottling	No Payed Prioritisation
Your internet service provider is not allowed to restrict your access to legal content of your preference.	Your internet access provider is prohibited from deliberately slowing down the speed of legal internet traffic compared to other traffic.	Your internet access provider is not permitted to offer a fast lane service to content providers based on their ability to pay more than others.

In 2015, the spotlight turned to the issue when Facebook unveiled 'Free Basics' and Airtel introduced 'Airtel Zero' in India. These initiatives offered free access to certain apps while imposing charges or subsidies on others. Despite claims of improving internet accessibility, TRAI banned both projects in 2016 for breaching net neutrality principles and averting potential favoritism toward specific content.

Global Stands on Net Neutrality

The global Net Neutrality debate rages on, several governments worldwide have already implemented and/or withdrew Net Neutrality regulations. These regulations vary in several aspects. Some countries have established laws that minutely detail which ISP practices are allowed or prohibited, while others are more permissive and/or reactive. Furthermore, the way each regulation came to be vastly differs from one country to another. For example Chile, Brazil, and the European Union have implemented relatively strict regulations, in contrast to countries such as Canada, Australia, and the USA, which have chosen not to adopt stringent laws and lack dedicated organizations for regulation. Meanwhile, some other countries opt to refrain entirely from enacting any laws on the matter.

Indian Stand on Net Neutrality

In 2016, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) established net neutrality regulations to promote an open Internet and discourage discriminatory practices by Internet service providers (ISPs) in India. Despite TRAI guidelines supporting net neutrality under the Unified Access Service License, enforcement is lacking. India lacks specific laws mandating net neutrality, and the Information Technology Act of 2000 does not explicitly prevent companies from throttling services. This regulatory situation raises concerns about the effective implementation and enforcement of net neutrality principles in the country.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) 2016 regulations

- It prohibits discriminatory Tariffs for data services based on the content being accessed.
- It prevented ISPs from blocking, throttling, or engaging in any form of discriminatory treatment of Internet traffic.
- The regulations allowed for the creation of specialized services, such as Internet of Things (IoT) or other services, which may be exempt from the net neutrality rules -under certain conditions.
- ISPs were required to be transparent about their traffic management practices and provide information to consumers about the nature and terms of their services.

Argument for Net Neutrality

The absence of net neutrality poses significant risks to the openness and fairness of the internet, leading to potential negative impacts on both businesses and consumers. Without net neutrality, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) could wield the power to manipulate internet traffic for their financial gain. For instance, they might charge content providers like YouTube and Netflix extra fees for services that consume more bandwidth, creating a scenario where established companies can afford premium access, stifling competition and innovation.

This lack of net neutrality also raises concerns about its impact on innovation. Startups, lacking the financial resources of established players, could find themselves at a severe disadvantage, as they might be unable to pay for faster access. This could result in a digital landscape dominated by a handful of major corporations, stifling the diverse and open ecosystem that has characterized the internet.

Additionally, democratic internet aligns with the needs of India, considering its developing market and relatively low per capita income. Implementing price brackets for internet access could create an information divide, potentially limiting access for a significant portion of the population. (For instance, paid entertainment Over-The-Top (OTT) services restricted by premium, turns it into a symbol of elitism, with only a fraction (45 cr) of Indian the population able to afford it). This scenario could lead to the emergence of New Information Elites, further exacerbating inequalities.

Argument against net neutrality

Net Neutrality runs against the economic principle of implementing differential pricing based on varying levels of service and user experience. Advocates of this viewpoint argue that differential pricing is essential for the sustainability and expansion of internet infrastructure, particularly in addressing the needs of the remaining 53% of India's population who don't have internet access till now. The financial challenges faced by Internet Service Providers (ISPs), exacerbated by market competition and an inability to raise tariff rates, have led to diminished profitability and even losses. According to ISPs, the imposition of net neutrality further exacerbates this situation by narrowing profit margins and hindering their ability to invest in the generation of new internet infrastructure.

A key concern raised by ISPs revolves around the unequal competition posed by Over-The-Top (OTT) services like Skype and WhatsApp. ISPs emphasize that they invest substantial amounts in infrastructure and spectrum licenses, while OTT services utilize ISP networks without contributing financially. This, in the eyes of ISPs, creates an unfair competitive landscape as OTT services directly compete with ISP services without sharing the financial responsibility for the maintenance and expansion of the underlying network.

Way Forward

India must strengthen its commitment to net neutrality by addressing enforcement gaps and considering comprehensive legislation that explicitly mandates equal treatment of internet traffic. Regulators should continue to evolve frameworks that balance the interests of ISPs, content providers, and consumers, fostering an environment that encourages innovation and ensures broad and affordable access to the internet as India is still in stage of infancy with (53 cr people still don't have internet) and having very less per capita income. This approach aligns with the principles of a democratic and inclusive internet, crucial for India's socio-economic development and global competitiveness.



LGBTQ+ Rights in India

(SC Judgments, Issues Related to Judgments, Challenges & Gender Justice)

SOCIAL

Sex as it occurs in Article 15, is not merely restricted to the biological attributes of an individual, but also includes their “sexual identity and character”.
—*Supreme Court of India*

Gender identities and masculine or feminine gender roles have historically been under lens. The diversity in gender cannot be defined under Male and Female, the definition goes beyond the biological connotation in a social sphere. There are vast gender identities which have varied definitions.

Globally, LGBTQIA+ is the accepted acronym, which defines multiple gender identities and diverse yet inclusive communities. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual, with the “+” indicating an inclusivity of other sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions that may not be explicitly covered by the initial letters. In India, there is a right of self identification under **Transgender Persons (Protection of right) Act, 2019**. It recognizes the right to self-perceived gender identity, and identification documents indicating gender as male or female can be issued by government agencies once a certificate is provided by a relevant medical official. Transgender citizens have a constitutional right to register themselves under a third gender.

Gender Justice: Moving from Historical Injustice to Partial Justice

Different gender identities have always been on the verge of discrimination and ill-treatment by the society. The presiding homophobia in the society has painted an evil picture for the community, marking it as a mental disorder and unnatural. In India, deeply-rooted cultural institutions play a major role in perpetuating gender inequality. The Indian courts often act as activists for people and a profound Indian Constitution create hope for achieving gender justice.

The LGBTQIA+ community has come a long way, fighting for equality and justice for basic existence. The community has faced stereotyping, discrimination and has been a target of hate crimes.

The Supreme Court of India ruled in *NALSA v/s Union of India* that the rights and freedoms of transgender people in India were protected under the Constitution; in September 2018, the Supreme Court also decriminalized adult consensual same-sex relationships in the Section 377 judgment review. These judgments are considered a landmark both in terms of their expansive reading of constitutional rights and in empowering LGBT persons. Both judgments mark an important moment for LGBT rights that not only reversed a relic of British imperial rule but also ordered that LGBT Indians be accorded all the protections of their constitution.

Challenges Faced by LGBTQIA+ Community

Societal stigma and discrimination were rampant, with many individuals experiencing prejudice and ostracization due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. The queer students often face bullying in the educational sphere and exclusion. There is a lack of exclusive public spheres, the hygiene facilities need

special need. The major challenge faced by the community was the seat at the table and representation. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive legal protections left individuals vulnerable to discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, education, and healthcare. Moreover, there are no family laws, marriage laws and defined adoption laws. There is a queer-phobia in society. The process of unlearning the prejudices is a difficult road, but the community is fighting for equality every day.

Rights of LGBTQIA+

The LGBTQIA+ community has come a long way, fighting for representation and general rights. As a result of this long period of struggle a comprehensive set of rights were provided under the transgender persons (right of protection) Act, 2019, which supported the 2014 Supreme court judgement. This Act entered the third gender under the legal sphere and not only provided a reorganisation but also provided definition to the other genders.

In the case of Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, the Supreme Court ruled that the Indian Constitution bans discrimination based on sexual orientation via the category of “sex”. Similarly in the case of *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court held that discrimination on the basis of gender identity is constitutionally prohibited.

Gender Identity Globally

Gender identities like the Lesbian, Gay, transgender and queer have historically been treated as a mental illness or disorder. The situation has gotten better with the intersectional feminism and the raised voices at the global front. A huge step forward was the removal of the homosexuality as a mental disorder from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Currently, there are many countries which not only recognise Homosexuality and different gender identities but also provide a comprehensive set of rights in both society and family sphere. There are rights to marriage, adoption and inheritance provided.

Issues Related to Supreme Court Judgements

The history of the long struggle from the Naz Foundation case in 2014 to The Navtez Singh Johar Case where the community finally got the right of representation, there are still roadblocks on the way. On the discussion of inducting the openly Queer people in the military, it was denied given the society is not ready for this change. In the recent judgment of Supriyo v/s the union of India, the Right to Marry was denied to the community. This is in conflict to the Art 21 and Art 14 in the constitution.

Henceforth, there is a dire need to reevaluate the judgement and provide a comprehensive set of family laws to the community which is the basic human right of any individual. There is a need to promote education and awareness on LGBTQIA+ issues, fostering understanding and empathy.

Establish and enforce anti-discrimination policies in workplaces and schools. Encourage inclusive language and representation in media, ensuring diverse narratives is portrayed accurately. Support LGBTQIA+ organizations through donations and partnerships. Foster safe spaces and allyship programs to create a welcoming environment.

Way forward

While we are still a long way from achieving what can be termed as “equality” in the sphere of gender, the fact that the Constitution provided a foundational basis to the idea of gender justice in India has helped us sustain a struggle for levelling the field en masse and has paved the way for enactment of legislations that were passed in the years following 1950. The Constitutional Provisions that provide for gender justice in India include Articles 14, 15, 16, 39, and 42. There are roadblocks on the way, but with patience, perseverance and tactical and thoughtful steps, a more inclusive society which adheres to the principle of equality can be built.



Caste Census in India

(Significance, Challenges, Arguments for and Against Caste Census & Measures to Ensure Social Justice)

POLITY

The recently released caste survey data by the Bihar government has once again brought the issue of caste census to the forefront. While the Census of India has been publishing data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, there has been no estimate for the population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and other groups.

What are Census and Socio Economic and Caste census (SECC)?

SECC (Socio-Economic and Caste Census)

- SECC was first conducted in 1931 which aimed to collect information on the economic status of Indian families, both in rural and urban areas, to identify indicators of deprivation.
- It also collects data on specific caste names to evaluate the economic conditions of different caste groups.

Difference between Census & SECC

- Census provides a general portrait of the Indian population, while SECC is used to identify beneficiaries of state support.
- Census data is confidential under the Census Act of 1948, while personal information in SECC is open for use by government departments to grant or restrict benefits to households.

Census in India

- The origin of the Census in India dates back to the colonial exercise of 1881.
- Census is used by the government, policymakers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, access resources, map social change, and conduct delimitation exercises.
- However, it has been criticized as a blunt instrument unsuited for specialized inquiry.

The History of Caste-based Data Collection in India

- Caste-based data collection has a long history in India, with information on castes being included upto 1931.
- Post 1951, the decision to stop collecting caste data was made to move away from a divisive approach and promote national unity.
- However, with changing socio-political dynamics and the need for accurate information, there has been a renewed call for a caste census.

Census and Socio Economic and Caste census (SECC)

Major Challenges of Caste Census

A. Repercussions of a Caste Census

- Caste has an emotive element and thus there exist the political and social repercussions of a caste census.
- There have been concerns that counting caste may help solidify or harden identities.
- Due to these repercussions, nearly a decade after the SECC, a sizable amount of its data remains unreleased or released only in parts.

B. Caste Is Context-specific

- Caste has never been a proxy for class or deprivation in India; it constitutes a distinct kind of embedded discrimination that often transcends class.
- **For example:** People with Dalit last names are less likely to be called for job interviews even when their qualifications are equal to an upper-caste candidate.

- They are also less likely to be accepted as tenants by landlords. Thus, difficult to measure.
- Marriage to a well- educated, well-off Dalit man still sparks violent reprisals among the families of upper-caste women every day across the country.

C. Lack of Trust & Clarity

- The Supreme Court has time and again asked governments to provide the data related to castes; however, this has not been possible due to the non-availability of such data.
- As a result, our national life suffers from mutual mistrust and misconceptions among different castes.
- All such commissions have had to rely on data from the last caste census (1931).

D. Other Issues

There are apprehensions that caste-based census would further promote:

- Caste-based political mobilisation
- Strong sentiments for or against reservations

Arguments for Caste Census

Address Social Inequality

- Caste-based discrimination is still prevalent in many parts of India. A caste census can help identify the disadvantaged groups and bring them to the forefront of policy making.
- By understanding the distribution of different caste groups, targeted policies can be implemented to address social inequality and uplift marginalized communities.

Ensure Equi-table Distribution of Resources

- Affirmative action policies such as reservations for OBCs and other groups are aimed at promoting social justice. However, without proper data on the population, it becomes challenging to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these policies.
- A caste census can help monitor the implementation and outcomes of such policies, enabling policymakers to make informed decisions regarding their continuation and modification.

Monitor the Effectiveness of Affirmative Action Policies

- Affirmative action policies such as reservations for OBCs and other groups are aimed at promoting social justice. However, without proper data on the population, it becomes challenging to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these policies.
- A caste census can help monitor the implementation and outcomes of such policies, enabling policymakers to make informed decisions regarding their continuation and modification.

Provide a Comprehensive Picture of Indian Society

- Caste is an integral part of Indian society, influencing social relationships, economic opportunities, and political dynamics.
- A caste census can provide a comprehensive picture of the diversity of Indian society, shedding light on the social fabric and interplay between different caste groups.
- This data can contribute to a better understanding of social dynamics.

Constitutional Mandate

- Our Constitution too favours conducting a caste census.
- Article 340 mandates the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by governments.

Arguments against Caste Census

Reinforces the Caste System:

- Opponents of a caste census argue that caste-based discrimination is illegal and that a caste census would only reinforce the caste system.
- They believe that focusing on individual rights and equal opportunities for all citizens should be prioritized over categorizing people based on their caste identities.

Difficult to Define Castes:

- Defining castes is a complex issue, as there are thousands of castes and sub-castes in India. A caste census would require a clear definition of castes, which is not an easy task.
- Critics argue that this could lead to confusion, disputes, and further divisions within society.

Leads to Further Social Divisions:

- Some argue that a caste census could lead to further social divisions and that it is better to focus on promoting social harmony instead.
- They believe that emphasizing commonalities among people rather than highlighting differences would be more beneficial for national integration.

Role of the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)

- The SECC conducted in 2011 was an attempt to collect comprehensive data on socio-economic indicators along with caste information.
- However, due to concerns over data quality and classification challenges, the raw caste data collected in the SECC has not yet been released or utilized effectively.
- An Expert Group was formed to classify and categorize the raw data, but its recommendations are still pending implementation.

Way Forward

- Independent studies at district and state level can be conducted to acquire the data of castes and subcastes at those levels.
- The data must not become a weapon for deepening faultlines and increasing polarisation to win elections. It should not lead to the splintering and shrinking of the very notion of representation in a large and diverse democracy.
- Use of technologies such as Artificial intelligence and machine learning can help in analyzing data.
- Sub-categorization of OBCs to provide representation to underrepresented subcastes of OBCs for which Justice Rohini commission had recently submitted the report.

Conclusion

While there are arguments for and against a caste census, accurate data on the population of OBCs and other groups is necessary for promoting social justice and ensuring equitable distribution of resources. A caste census can also help monitor the effectiveness of affirmative action policies and provide a comprehensive picture of Indian society. It is crucial for policymakers to carefully consider the arguments of both the sides to provide for a more equitable and just society.



Green Revolution

(Objectives, Impacts, Challenges, Green Revolution vs. Green Revolution 2.0)

AGRICULTURE

While M S Swaminathan may no longer be with us, his indelible legacy endures in the hearts and minds of every student and scientist dedicated to the field of agriculture. His most renowned achievement was his collaboration with Norman Borlaug to initiate the Green Revolution in India during the tumultuous mid-1960s, a period marked by consecutive droughts that posed a severe threat of mass starvation.

At that time, India was ensnared in a precarious situation, colloquially referred to as a “ship to mouth” economy, reliant on importing a staggering 10 million tonnes of food under the P.L.480 scheme, all while grappling with a dearth of foreign exchange to meet this crucial need. The gravity of the circumstances was underscored by the earnest plea of then-Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who beseeched the nation to “skip a meal in a week,” even leading to the omission of wheat products, including the cherished wheat chapatis, from wedding feasts.

Objectives:

- To **achieve self-reliance and food security** for the population and reduce dependence on food imports.
- To **improve the income and living standards** of millions of farmers and rural people, and reduce poverty and hunger
- To **modernize the agriculture sector** and make it more efficient, profitable, and competitive in the global market.

Impacts of the Green Revolution

A. Increased Food Production

- The Green Revolution led to a significant increase in agricultural productivity. New high-yielding crop varieties, such as dwarf wheat and rice, produced higher yields per hectare of land, helping to meet the growing global demand for food.
- For example, in 1978–1979, a tremendous increase in crop production led to a grain output of 131 million tonnes making India one of the largest agricultural producers in the world.

B. Reduced food-grain imports

- India is a net exporter of wheat, rice and other food grains such as rye, maize, sorghum, buckwheat, bajra, ragi and their import is negligible.
- In 2020-21, India exported 18.5 million tonnes of rice, which was the highest ever in a year. India also exported 2.1 million tonnes of wheat in 2020-21, which was the highest in six years.

C. Poverty Alleviation

- Higher agricultural productivity often translates into higher incomes for farmers. The Green Revolution helped lift many small-scale farmers out of poverty by increasing their crop yields and income levels.
- For example, the poverty ratio in rural India declined from 50.1% in 1993-94 to 25.7% in 2011-12, partly due to the impact of the Green Revolution.

D. Technological Advancements

- The Green Revolution introduced farmers to new agricultural technologies, including improved seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. These technological advancements continue to benefit agriculture today, contributing to sustainable practices and greater efficiency.
- For instance, the use of improved seeds has increased the genetic diversity of crops, making them more resilient to pests, diseases, and climate change.
- The use of mechanized farm tools, such as tractors, harvesters, and irrigation systems, has reduced labour costs and increased farm productivity.

E. Rural Development

- Increased agricultural productivity can stimulate rural development. As farmers earn more income, they can invest in their communities, leading to improved infrastructure, education, and healthcare in rural areas.
- For example, in India, the Green Revolution led to the expansion of rural roads, electrification, irrigation, and communication networks, which improved the accessibility and connectivity of rural areas.

F. Reduction in Land Conversion

- By increasing crop yields, the Green Revolution helped reduce the need to convert forests and other natural habitats into agricultural land.
- This has had positive environmental impacts by preserving biodiversity and reducing deforestation.

G. Economic Growth

- The increased agricultural productivity resulting from the Green Revolution has been linked to overall economic growth in many countries.
- Agriculture is a key driver of economic development in many regions, and higher yields can boost the overall economy.

Challenges brought by the Green Revolution

It led to the loss of biodiversity and genetic diversity of crops, as well as the displacement of indigenous crops and traditional farming practices. For example, the production of wheat and rice doubled after the Green Revolution, while that of other food crops, such as indigenous rice types and millets, decreased.

It caused environmental degradation due to the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and soil erosion and water pollution. For example, the reliance on modern agricultural technologies has made some countries and communities dependent on external inputs, which can be expensive and subject to market fluctuations.

It created social and economic inequalities and conflicts among farmers, regions, and countries. For example, the Green Revolution has been linked to farmer suicides, rural indebtedness, and droughts in India.

It increased the vulnerability of crops to pests, diseases, and climate change. For example, the monoculture of rice and wheat made them more susceptible to outbreaks of pests and diseases, such as the brown plant hopper and the wheat rust.

Green revolution vs. Green revolution 2.0

Green revolution	Green revolution 2.0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using High-Yield Variety (HYV) seeds to increase food production. These seeds were developed by agricultural scientists like M. S. Swaminathan, who is widely regarded as the Father of the Green Revolution in India. • Incorporating various irrigation methods, such as tube wells, canals, dams, and sprinklers, to reduce the dependence on rainfall and ensure regular water supply for the crops. • Mechanization of major agricultural practices, such as ploughing, sowing, harvesting, and threshing, using tractors, harvesters, and drills, to reduce labour costs and increase efficiency. • Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to enhance soil fertility and protect the crops from pests and diseases. • Double cropping in the existing farmland, which means growing two crops in the same field in one year, to increase the cropping intensity and yield. • Expansion of the farming area, by bringing more land under cultivation, especially in the semi-arid and arid regions, using irrigation and HYV seeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering: Green Revolution 2.0 places a strong emphasis on biotechnology and genetic engineering to develop crops that are more resilient to climate change, pests, and diseases. Genetically modified (GM) crops, if adopted responsibly, can contribute to increased productivity and reduced environmental impact. • Precision Agriculture: This approach involves the use of advanced technologies like GPS-guided tractors and drones to optimize the use of resources such as water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Precision agriculture can increase efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of farming. • Sustainability: Green Revolution 2.0 prioritizes sustainability by promoting practices that conserve soil health, reduce chemical inputs, and minimize the environmental impact of agriculture. This includes organic farming, agroecology, and integrated pest management. • Diversification: Unlike the first Green Revolution, which primarily focused on a few staple crops like wheat and rice, Green Revolution 2.0 promotes crop diversification. Encouraging the cultivation of a wider variety of crops can enhance nutrition; reduce risks associated with mono-cropping, and preserve biodiversity. • Holistic Approach: Green Revolution 2.0 takes a holistic view of agriculture, recognizing that it's not just about crop production but also includes aspects like soil health, food processing, marketing, and value addition. Integrated approaches address the entire food supply chain. • Environmental Considerations: Efforts are made to mitigate the negative environmental impacts associated with modern agriculture, such as soil erosion, water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable practices aim to minimize these effects. • Adaptation to Climate Change: As climate change poses new challenges to agriculture, Green Revolution 2.0 seeks to develop climate-resilient crop varieties and practices that can adapt to changing weather patterns and extremes.

The Green Revolution was a major initiative that aimed to increase the production and quality of food crops, especially wheat and rice, in India, by introducing new technologies, such as high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation, and mechanization.



Women's Reservation Bill

(Gender Equality in India, Reservation for Women in Politics in India, Arguments For & Against the Bill, Challenges in Respect of Implementation of the Bill)

SOCIAL

Lok Sabha (LS) and Rajya Sabha (RS) made history by passing the Women's Reservation Bill 2023, also known as the **128th Constitutional Amendment Bill or Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**. This groundbreaking legislation aims to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies, and the Delhi assembly for women, including seats designated for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Lok Sabha and State Legislatures.

The history of the Women's Reservation Bill dates back to the tenure of Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1996. However, due to the government's lack of a majority, the bill could not be approved at that time.

The need for the Women's Reservation Bill is underscored by the stark gender disparities in Indian politics. Currently, women hold only **14.94% of seats in the Lok Sabha and 14.05% in the Rajya Sabha**. While there has been progress since the inception of the first Lok Sabha, where women constituted only 5% of members but India still lags behind many countries in terms of female representation.

The Women's Reservation Bill 2023 introduces several key features aimed at increasing women's representation in Indian politics:

1. **Reservation for Women in the Lower House and State Legislative Assemblies:** This aspect of the bill involves the insertion of **Article 330A and Article 332A** into the constitution, drawing inspiration from the provisions of **Article 330**, which provides for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly. Under this provision, reserved seats for women may be allocated through rotation to different constituencies in states or Union Territories. Furthermore, in horizontal reservation the bill seeks to allocate one-third of the seats reserved for SCs/STs to women on a rotational basis, ensuring that women from marginalized communities also have enhanced representation. Lastly bill
2. **Reservation for Women in the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT of Delhi):** The bill addresses the unique status of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, as outlined in Article 239AA of the constitution. This article grants special status to Delhi as the national capital with regards to its administrative and legislative functioning.
3. **Commencement of Reservation (New Article - 334A):** The bill introduces a new article, Article 334A, which outlines the timeline for the commencement of women's reservation. According to this provision, the reservation will come into effect after the census conducted following the commencement of the bill is published. This census data will be crucial for the subsequent delimitation process, which will determine the allocation of seats reserved for women.

4. **Rotation of Seats:** The bill advocates for the rotation of seats reserved for women after each delimitation. The specifics of this rotation will be determined by a law enacted by Parliament, ensuring that the allocation of reserved seats remains dynamic and responsive to changing demographics and constituencies.

Significance of the bill and Impact on Indian Social Fabrics

The Women's Reservation Bill offers multifaceted and far-reaching implications. At its core, the bill seeks to promote gender equality and empower women, recognizing their substantial presence in India's population. By reserving seats for women in legislatures, it actively encourages their political participation and leadership at all government levels, contributing to more inclusive governance.

One of its pivotal roles is amplifying women's voices on critical issues, including their rights, education, health, and safety. Increased representation leads to policies addressing gender-based discrimination and violence, as women elected officials advocate for gender-sensitive legislation. Moreover, women in political office serve as inspiring role models for others, encouraging women and girls to pursue leadership roles.

Beyond representation, the bill challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes, challenging the patriarchal fabric of Indian society. By introducing gender diversity into decision-making bodies, it enhances governance and decision-making, incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences.

Critiques of Women's Reservation Bill

Firstly, they argue that the bill lacks clarity regarding the specific election cycles from which women will benefit. While it mentions delimitation and census data, it does not provide a clear timeline for implementation, leaving room for ambiguity and logistical challenges.

Secondly, critics point out that the bill's scope does not extend to the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of Parliament) and State Legislative Councils. Given the lower representation of women in the Rajya Sabha compared to the Lok Sabha (the Lower House), opponents contend that gender parity should be achieved in both houses to ensure comprehensive political equity.

Challenges to the bill

First, there is a concern about tokenism, where women may be perceived as filling quotas rather than being genuinely supported and empowered. This can undermine the credibility of women leaders and their ability to make a meaningful impact.

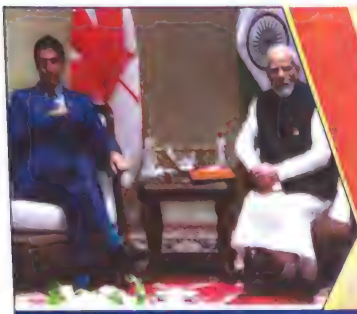
Second, there's the issue of resistance and backlash against women in leadership roles. Reservation policies alone may not dismantle deeply entrenched patriarchy, and some may push back against women's increased representation.

Third, these policies often have a limited scope, primarily addressing political representation while not directly addressing broader societal and cultural norms that perpetuate gender bias.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of reservation policies can vary based on the intersectionality of women's experiences, accounting for factors like social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

Women's Reservation Bill 2023 represents a significant step towards gender equality and political empowerment in India. However, it is not without its challenges and criticisms. The successful implementation of this bill will depend on careful consideration of these concerns and a commitment to adapting and refining the legislation as needed. Ultimately, the Women's Reservation Bill has the potential to transform the Indian political landscape, ushering in a new era of gender parity and inclusive governance.



India-Canada Relations

(Significance, Recent India Canada Disputes, Challenges of the India Canada Relationship & Way Forward)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Indo-Canadian relationship is witnessing new down, due to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, khalistani separatist in Canada. The incident had created diplomatic row since G20 summit and later escalated to a level to an expulsion of a senior diplomat posted in both countries high commission and countries issuing an travel advisory to their citizens and postponing CEPA meeting on trade negotiations.

India accused Canada of being a safe haven for khalistan separatists since decades and Canadian government cold response to the issue has always been a downward anchor to Indo-Canadian relation. It is not that Canada is untouched of terrorist activities of khalistan group but social fabric political stronghold of Sikh diaspora made them inactive.

History of Khalistan Movement and Terrorism in Canada

Early Khalistan Movement in Canada:

- The Khalistan movement traces back to Surjan Singh Gill's establishment of the 'Khalistan government in exile' office in Vancouver in 1982, with limited local Sikh support.

Connection to Punjab Militancy:

- The militancy in Punjab during the 1980s had repercussions in Canada.
- Canada's handling of individuals like Talwinder Singh Parmar, accused of terrorism in Punjab was criticized by India.

Air India Bombing (1985):

- Canada witnessed a horrific act of terrorism with the bombing of Air India Kanishka in June 1985, orchestrated by the Babbar Khalsa, a Khalistani outfit.

The India-Canada relationship, spanning over seven decades, is a vibrant tapestry woven with diplomatic ties, economic collaborations, and shared values. With a growing Indian diaspora, burgeoning trade, and partnerships in education, science, and technology, this partnership reflects the strength of shared principles.

Significance

In terms of economic cooperation, bilateral trade previously amounted to a substantial \$6 billion annually, complemented by Indian investments in Canada valued at over \$4 billion. Remarkably, Canada ranks as the 18th largest foreign investor in India, with investments totalling approximately \$3,306 million from April 2000 to March 2023.

The economic ties between the two nations are further solidified by the presence of over 600 Canadian companies in India and the active pursuit of business opportunities by more than 1,000 Canadian firms within the Indian market. Notably, technical negotiations are in progress for a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** encompassing trade in goods, services, investment, and trade facilitation.

In the realm of diaspora connections, Canada hosts one of the largest Indian Diasporas globally, with an impressive 16 lakh individuals of Indian origin, constituting more than **3% of Canada's total population**. Additionally, there are approximately **700,000 Non-Residential Indians (NRIs)** are from Canada.

Education and innovation have emerged as pivotal facets of the relationship, with Indian students in Canada comprising a substantial **40% of the entire international student population in the country**. Collaboration between Canada's Intellectual Property Office and India's Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) reinforces cooperation in the critical area of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

Lastly, the space sector showcases burgeoning cooperation, with **ISRO and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA)** signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to explore and utilize outer space collaboratively. Antrix, the commercial arm of ISRO, has successfully launched several nanosatellites from Canada. In a historic achievement, ISRO's 100th Satellite PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) carried Canada's first Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite from the Indian spaceport Sriharikota in 2018.

Challenges of the India-Canada Relationship

The issue of Khalistani separatism has indeed been a significant challenge in India-Canada relations. Canada's approach to balancing Sikh aspirations with its ties to India has complicated matters, leading to tensions. Incidents like attacks on Indian consulates, temples, and the non-Sikh Indian diaspora have further strained relations, raising concerns about the safety and security of Indian nationals in Canada.

The close relationship between the Canadian government and the Chinese Communist Party's government has also added strain to India-Canada relations. This alignment with China has implications for India-China relations and raises concerns about the impact of this closeness on broader regional dynamics.

Way forward

Indian government diplomatic efforts have underscored India's message to Canada that maintaining positive relations while harbouring anti-India separatist groups is untenable. **Public statements that could further strain relations should be avoided** in favour of discreet and constructive dialogue.

To counter Khalistani propaganda, enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest is crucial. This includes **fostering ties in trade, investment, education, and people-to-people interactions (Civil Society and Track II Diplomacy)**. Joint initiatives like business delegations, student exchanges, and cultural events can bridge gaps and foster understanding between the diaspora and the Indian government.

In navigating these complex challenges, diplomacy plays a pivotal role. India's efforts to convey concerns and expectations to Canada while engaging constructively with the Sikh community can help build a more harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries. It is a delicate balance between addressing security concerns and maintaining diplomatic ties, but a nuanced approach can yield positive outcomes for both nations.

Dehypenation is the key. India and Canada should separate their political disputes, like the Khalistan issue, from their trade and investment relations. Resuming trade negotiations and finalizing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is vital for economic growth and strengthened diplomatic ties.

Engaging civil society organizations and promoting Track II diplomacy initiatives can foster people-to-people connections. These efforts encourage dialogue and conflict resolution, creating a foundation for better understanding.

In sum, a pragmatic approach, dehypenation of political and economic issues, civil society engagement, and responsible media reporting can pave the way for a more robust Indo-Canadian relationship. By focusing on shared interests and facilitating dialogue, both nations can work towards a more productive and cooperative partnership.



Abrogation of Article 370

(Supreme Court's Verdict, Impact on J&K's Economy, Infrastructure Development, Violence and Tourism)

POLITY

Supreme Court of India on 11th December 2023 issued a judgment affirming the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A. The ruling, emphasizing the sovereignty and integrity of India, is cherished by every Indian. The Court observed that the decision on August 5, 2019, to revoke Article 370 aimed at strengthening constitutional integration, dispelling notions of disintegration. Additionally, the Court acknowledged the non-permanent nature of Article 370.

Supreme Court Judgement

The Supreme Court's verdict on Article 370 addressed several key issues surrounding its nature and implications. The court determined that Article 370 was intended as a temporary provision, considering its historical context, wording, and placement in the Constitution under Part XXI. It clarified that Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) did not possess internal sovereignty following a proclamation by Karan Singh in 1949, effectively merging with the Union under the Indian Constitution.

The court highlighted the **feature of asymmetric federalism in Article 370**, emphasizing that the special status granted to J&K was a higher degree of autonomy within the framework of Indian federalism. It deemed the **Constitution of J&K subordinate to the Constitution of India**, rendering Article 370 inoperative after Constitutional Orders 272 and 273.

Regarding the President's rule in J&K, the **court upheld its validity and affirmed the President's authority to assume "all or any" roles of the State legislature**. It clarified the limits on Parliament's power under Article 356 during this period.

The court **recognized the Parliament's authority to reorganize J&K into two Union Territories** under Article 3, asserting that the State legislature's consent was not required during President's Rule. Additionally, the court urged the Union to restore J&K's statehood promptly.

A noteworthy recommendation from the court was the **establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)** similar to South Africa's post-apartheid era. This TRC aims to address human rights violations in J&K since the 1980s, committed by both State and non-State actors.

In addressing the electoral aspect, the court **directed the Election Commission of India to conduct elections to the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024**. This becomes crucial as the region has not witnessed elections since 2014, and the last elected administration concluded in June 2018. The significance of these elections lies in re-establishing a representative government in the Union Territory of J&K after an extended period without one.

Why Abrogation of Article 370 was the Necessary Evil?

Article 370, part of the Indian constitution, granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a disputed region claimed by India, Pakistan, and China. Drafted in 1949 as a **'temporary provision'** by **N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar**, it allowed the state its own constitution, flag, and autonomy over most matters, excluding defence, foreign affairs, and communications. The basis for this article was the Instrument of Accession, signed in 1947 by Jammu and Kashmir's ruler, Hari Singh, aligning the region with India after a Pakistani invasion.

Article 370, initially designed as a temporary and transitional measure to facilitate the integration of the state into India, played a crucial role in managing the historical colonial complexities and the complex trilateral struggle involving India, China, and Pakistan. However, in the contemporary reality of the 21st century, Article 370 has transformed into a hindrance, acting as a loophole in the governance of the state.

The autonomy granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 is now perceived as a factor impeding the state's growth, and it has become synonymous with the temporary status of the state on the Indian map. This perception has led to various opinions against Indian unity, particularly in the context of Azad Kashmir, expressed by several Muslim nations. In essence, Article 370, initially intended to aid integration, has evolved into a contentious issue, impacting the governance and unity of the region in the present-day geopolitical landscape.

The abrogation of Article 370 was driven by several key considerations. Firstly, it aimed at facilitating the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union to foster development. The belief was that seamless integration would provide better access to resources, infrastructure, and opportunities, ultimately benefitting the people of J&K.

National security concerns also played a pivotal role. Exploited by Pakistan, Article 370 was seen as contributing to terrorism and separatism. Its removal was expected to enhance national security by granting the Indian government greater control over the region, enabling more effective measures against terrorist activities.

The abrogation addressed issues of discrimination inherent in Article 370, particularly against women, Dalits, and marginalized groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Its removal brought these communities under the broader umbrella of Indian laws, ensuring equal rights and opportunities.

Furthermore, the move aimed at fostering transparency and accountability in governance. Article 370 had created a system lacking in both aspects, and the abrogation subjected Jammu and Kashmir to the oversight of the Central Vigilance Commission and the Right to Information Act, promoting better governance and accountability.

Economically, Article 370 had impeded development in Jammu and Kashmir. Its removal was expected to open avenues for increased investment, tourism, and job creation, fostering economic prosperity in the region.

Impact of Abrogation of Article 370 on Union Territories

The abrogation of Article 370 has brought about significant transformations in Jammu and Kashmir. Notably, there has been a remarkable decrease in violence, with official data indicating a more than 50% reduction in terrorist incidents. Security forces have successfully neutralized over 300 militants in the past four years, attributed to enhanced security measures, improved intelligence gathering, and a decline in public support for militancy.

Economically, the region has witnessed positive changes, with government initiatives like the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) and the Industrial Development Scheme (IDS) fostering increased investment, job creation, and a noteworthy 31% growth in tax revenue. The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of J&K saw an 8% growth during 2022-23, outpacing the national level at 7%.

Infrastructure development has been a key focus, with substantial investments in the construction of roads, bridges, tunnels, and power lines, enhancing connectivity and facilitating business operations within the region.

Additionally, tourism in Jammu and Kashmir has flourished post Article 370 abrogation, driven by improved security, effective marketing, and the introduction of new tourism initiatives. In 2022 alone, the region welcomed a record-breaking 1.62 crore tourists, marking a historic milestone in India's 75 years of independence.

The recent Supreme Court verdict not only reaffirms the principles of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Best India) but also stands as a poignant reminder of the significance of unity and a shared commitment to effective governance. This judicial decision underscores the court's dedication to fortifying the cohesive fabric of our nation and reinforcing the core values that define us as a society. It serves as a powerful testament to the court's role in upholding the ideals of a harmonious and collectively prosperous India.

ESSAY IDEA



Israel-Palestine Conflict

(History, Repercussions of Israel-Palestine conflict on India)

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

History, Repercussions of Israel-Palestine conflict on India

Context

On October 7, 2023, Hamas leader Mohammed Deif announced the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, a large-scale offensive against Israel. This sparked the worst flare-up in the Israel-Palestine conflict in recent years. Israel declared a state of war in response and asked Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip. India also launched Operation Ajay to help Indian nationals evacuate from Israel.



History

- The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the world's longest-running and most controversial conflicts.
- It is a conflict between two self-determination movements, the Jewish nationalist project and the Palestinian nationalist project, in the same territory.
- The land to which Jews and Palestinians lay claim was under the Ottoman Empire and then the British Empire in the early 20th century.
- Palestinian people, the Arab people from the same area, want to have a state by the name of Palestine in that area.
- The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is over who gets what land and how it's controlled.
- In the 20th century, Jews fleeing persecution in Europe wanted to establish a Jewish state on the land they considered their ancient homeland.
- The Arabs at the time resisted, saying the land was theirs. The land at the time was called Palestine.

REPERCUSSIONS OF ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT ON INDIA

A. Defence Deals with Israel:

- India has a significant defence relationship with Israel, with defence procurement and technology cooperation. The conflict may impact this relationship, as Israel may focus more on its security needs during the conflict.
- Israel supplies the most military equipment to India, with the military business between the two countries worth around USD 2.1 billion.

B. Energy Security:

- India is dependent on oil imports from the Middle East, and any escalation in the region could affect energy prices and, subsequently, India's economy.

- Since the entire world economies are interconnected therefore, if countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran get involved in ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict then definitely there will be direct consequences over India's energy supply, economy and investment.

C. Impact on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor:

- The conflict has the potential to affect the stability of the Middle East, a region of strategic importance to India.
- An escalation of hostilities could have implications for India's interests and engagements in the region.

Way Forward

- Maintaining a status quo in the Israel-Palestine conflict is a challenging endeavour, and India can play a constructive role by promoting a peaceful resolution based on a two-nation theory.
- India should continue its diplomatic efforts and use its international influence to encourage both Israel and Palestine to return to the negotiating table.
- India must continue to act as a mediator and provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people to address the immediate needs and alleviate suffering in conflict-affected areas.
- Encourage dialogues and exchanges between Israeli and Palestinian civil society groups, academics, and youth to promote mutual understanding and trust.



ELEPHANT CORRIDORS

Elephant corridors are the strips of land that enable elephant movement between two or more friendly habitats. They were reported by the respective state governments.

The Indian government identified 62 new elephant corridors; this brings the total number of such corridors to 150. According to the report, West Bengal leads with 26 corridors, east central India contributes with 52 corridors, and the North East region has 48 corridors. Southern India has 21% corridors, and northern India has the lowest with 12% corridors.

Elephants are keystone species as well as the Natural Heritage Animal of India. India has the largest number of wild Asian elephants. Karnataka has the highest elephant population in India.

Conservation Status:

- Convention of the Migratory Species (CMS): Appendix I
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of threatened species:
 - Asian Elephant: Endangered
 - African Forest Elephant: Critically Endangered
 - African Savanna Elephant: Endangered



India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)

(Importance of IMEC for India, India's Role in IMEC, IMEC vs. BRI)

The G20 Summit in New Delhi saw the signing of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) Project, which has important geopolitical and economic consequences for India. The initiative is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII). PGII is a values-driven, high-impact, and transparent infrastructure partnership aimed at meeting the vast infrastructure needs of low and middle-income nations. The proposed IMEC will include railway, ship-to-rail networks, and road transport links that span two corridors: the East Corridor, which connects India to the Arabian Gulf, and the Northern Corridor which connects the Gulf to Europe. A power cable, a hydrogen pipeline, and a high-speed data cable will also be included in the IMEC corridor.

India- Middle East and Europe corridor



IMPORTANCE OF IMEC FOR INDIA

Counter to BRI:

- In the Eurasian region, this might be a potential opposition to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- It has the potential to offset China's expanding economic and political power, particularly in regions with traditionally strong ties to the United States.

India's Strategic Role in Africa:

- The corridor's model might be expanded to Africa, in line with the United States and the European Union's plans to build a Trans-African corridor.
- This demonstrates India's intention to deepen its engagement with Africa and contribute to the continent's infrastructural development.

Trade Opportunities:

- The route has the potential to dramatically reduce transit times, making trade with Europe 40% faster than the Suez Canal sea route.

Creation of Jobs:

- As economic activity expands as a result of increased connectivity, job opportunities across sectors will increase.
- The expansion of trade, infrastructure, and allied sectors will demand skilled and unskilled labour, resulting in increased employment.

Connectivity and Peace:

- IMEC has the ability to improve intra-regional connectivity and assist alleviate political tensions in the Arabian Peninsula.

INDIA'S ROLE IN IMEC

1. Trade Facilitation

India could participate in IMEC as a key trading partner, utilizing the corridor to transport goods to and from the Middle East and Europe. This would involve fostering trade relationships, reducing trade barriers, and streamlining customs and logistics procedures to enhance the flow of goods.

2. Investment

India might invest in infrastructure development along the corridor, such as roads, railways, ports, and logistical facilities, to ensure the smooth movement of goods.

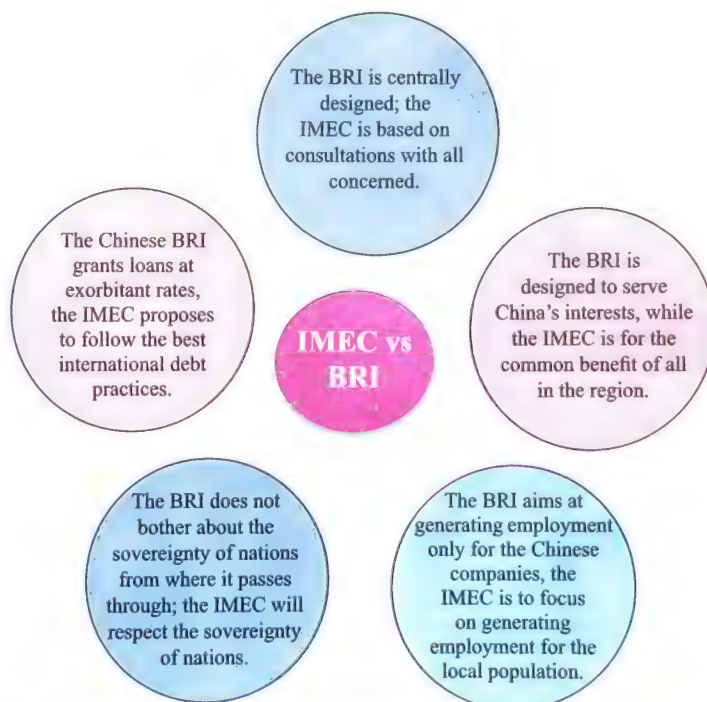
3. Geopolitical Cooperation

India could engage in diplomatic efforts to support the initiative, working with partner countries in the Middle East and Europe to promote regional stability and cooperation.

4. Transit and Transit Fees

Depending on the route and agreements involved in IMEC, India could serve as a transit country for goods traveling between the Middle East and Europe.

IMEC vs. BRI



WAY FORWARD

- Achieving technical compatibility and standardisation in terms of gauges, train technologies, container dimensions, and other critical aspects across different countries is vital for seamless operations.
- Balancing the geopolitical interests of participating nations and addressing potential political sensitivities, especially regarding Israel, is crucial for smooth implementation.
- Addressing environmental impact concerns, ensuring sustainability, and adhering to green and eco-friendly practices in construction and operation are critical aspects of the project.
- Implementing robust security measures to safeguard cargo and infrastructure from potential threats, theft, piracy, and other security risks is essential.



AI Regulation for Child Safety

(Need, Measures to protect young Children while preserving the benefits of AI)

Introduction

As artificial intelligence (AI) systems continue to advance, concerns regarding their impact on society, especially children are growing. Integrating ethics and human rights into AI development and application is crucial to alleviate these concerns. Educating children about responsible AI use and drawbacks and fostering critical thinking skills enables them to actively participate in shaping AI technology. However, existing AI strategies and products by governments lack explicit consideration for child protection, necessitating collaborative efforts to ensure the long-term growth of democratic institutions and core beliefs.

NEED FOR AI REGULATION FOR CHILD SAFETY

Regulating AI for overall Safety:

- Regulations should focus on aligning incentives to tackle addiction, mental health issues, and overall safety concerns.
- There are risks of data-hungry AI services deploying deceptive practices to exploit impressionable youth.

Body Image and Cyber Threats

- AI-driven distortions of physical appearance can lead to body image issues among young people.
- AI's role in spreading misinformation, radicalization, and cyber bullying and sexual harassment is potentially significant.

Deep Fake Vulnerabilities

- AI-powered deep fakes can target young individuals, including morphed explicit content distribution.

Intersectional Identities and Bias

- There is a diverse landscape of gender, caste, tribal identity, religion, and linguistic heritage in India.
- There could be potential transposition of real-world biases into digital spaces, impacting marginalized communities.

Reevaluating Data Protection Laws

- The current data protection framework in India lacks effectiveness in protecting children's interests.
- The ban on tracking children's data by default can limit the benefits of personalization.

MEASURES TO PROTECT YOUNG CHILDREN WHILE PRESERVING THE BENEFITS OF AI

Drawing from UNICEF's Guidance

- UNICEF's guidance, based on the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, emphasizes nine requirements for child-centric AI.
- This guidance can be used to create a digital environment that promotes children's well-being, fairness, safety, transparency, and accountability.

Embracing Best Practices

- The upcoming **Digital India Act (DIA)** should enhance protection for children interacting with AI.
- It should promote safer platform operations and user interface designs.

Role of the Digital India Act (DIA)

- The **Californian Act** serves as a template, advocating for transparency in default privacy settings and assessing potential harm to children from algorithms and data collection.
- Establishment of institutions like **Australia's Online Safety Youth Advisory Council** can be considered.

Age-Appropriate Design Code for AI

- Indian authorities should encourage research to collect evidence regarding the impact of AI on Indian children and adolescents.
- Gathered evidence can be set as a foundation for developing an Indian Age-Appropriate Design Code for AI.

Child-Friendly AI Products and Services

- AI-driven platforms should ensure to offer age-appropriate content and services that enhance education, entertainment, and overall well-being.
- Robust parental control features that allow parents to monitor and limit their children's online activities should be implemented.

Digital Feedback Channels

- Child-friendly online feedback channels where children can share their AI-related experiences and concerns should be developed.
- Interactive tools like surveys and forums should be used to gather inputs.



INDIA-US DIALOGUE

India and the United States have reaffirmed their commitment to collaborating on addressing global illicit finance risks.

The joint statement follows the India-US Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Dialogue, co-chaired by India's revenue secretary Sanjay Malhotra and US Treasury under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson.

Both parties acknowledged the "pressing need" to expedite the global implementation of AML/CFT standards for virtual assets in line with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations.

The aim is to effectively address regulatory arbitrage, with a focus on responsible innovation while mitigating illicit finance risks.



India-Maldives Relations

(Strategic Importance of Maldives for India, China a Roadblock to India-Maldives Relations)

The Maldives recently elected President, Mohamed Muizzu, who is perceived to be inclined towards greater Chinese influence, as evidenced by his advocacy for the withdrawal of Indian forces from Maldivian territory. This highlights the topsy-turvy foreign policy dynamics of the Maldives, which consistently grapples with the challenge of maintaining a balance between its relationships with India and China. The situation serves as a noteworthy example of China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean region.

India and the Maldives have deep-rooted ties in ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and commerce, fostering a close and multi-dimensional relationship. India promptly recognized Maldives' independence in 1965, establishing diplomatic relations.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MALDIVES FOR INDIA

Strategic importance of the Maldives for India is underscored by its role in regional security, economic interests, global cooperation, and anti-terrorism efforts. Geopolitically, the Maldives is vital for maintaining political stability in the Indian Ocean region, safeguarding Indian commerce, and serving as a junction for international shipping lanes. Despite its small size, the Maldives' geographic location positions it as a critical link between the Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden, facilitating the global transfer of energy and trade. Economically, the sustainable management of marine resources in the Maldives is pivotal for India's success in the blue economy, emphasizing the interconnected nature of their economic interests.

In the context of security, the Maldives collaborates with India on anti-terrorism operations, recognizing the prevalence of radical influences in the region. In-depth defence cooperation and the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism reflect a joint commitment to addressing shared security challenges.

CHINESE ROADBLOCK & INDIA'S COUNTER-MEASURES

China's significant presence in the Maldives, driven by economic engagement and extensive investments under the Belt and Road Initiative, raises concerns about debt traps and undue influence. China's hegemonic ambitions in the Indian Ocean, exemplified by the "String of Pearls" initiative, pose a potential threat to the Maldives' democratic development. India, alarmed by China's growing influence in the region, particularly through Chinese-controlled ports, politically and military facilities, has responded with intensified diplomatic efforts, economic assistance, infrastructure projects, and expanded defence cooperation with Maldives and other Indian Ocean nations. India's proactive measures align with its "Neighbourhood First" policy, seeking to counterbalance China's increasing presence and safeguard regional security.

CONCLUSION

India's strategic opportunities in the Maldives lie in prioritizing a development-oriented approach, particularly addressing youth unemployment through projects like the High Impact Community Development Project. The Greater Male Connectivity Project underscores India's influence over China, offering a path forward as the Maldives seeks balanced relations.



COP 28

In Dubai, UAE, the 28th Conference of Parties (COP-28) recently transpired, featuring representatives from 197 nations showcasing their endeavours to address global warming. The event resulted in a blend of favourable achievements and setbacks, representing a significant progression from the Paris Agreement. COPs, integral to the UNFCCC since 1992, serve as the primary decision-making body and adopt resolutions on diverse climate action areas, including mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, and transparency.

Outcome of COP 28

COP 28 yielded key outcomes, beginning with the Global Stocktake (GST), outlining eight steps to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This includes tripling global renewable energy capacity, doubling energy efficiency improvements, and significantly reducing non-CO2 emissions, particularly methane, by 2030. The conference emphasized transitioning from fossil fuels to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) focused on doubling adaptation finance, with explicit 2030 targets for water security, ecosystem restoration, and health. In terms of climate finance, there's a push for wealthy nations to fulfil a USD 500 billion debt to developing countries by 2025.

Key Concerns in COP 28

COP 28 raises significant concerns, notably the absence of explicit timelines for fossil fuel phase-out and the lack of specific targets for tripling global renewable energy. The adaptation goals suffer from a dearth of defined mechanisms, and the accord falls short in establishing accountability for financial commitments. Complicating matters, varying interpretations and methodologies for climate finance data, coupled with the potential for double counting, introduce uncertainties. Furthermore, resistance from certain nations, including India, China, and South Africa, poses challenges to efforts aimed at the phase-down of coal.

India's Initiative

India's significant contributions in COP 28 include the Green Credit Initiative, encouraging pro-planet actions through Green Credits for ecological restoration. The country also launched Phase II of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2.0), emphasizing inclusive industry transition and low-carbon technology transfer. Additionally, India introduced the Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) under the National Mission for Clean Ganga, promoting sustainable river-centric development. The Quad Climate Working Group (QCWG) spotlighted local communities' pivotal role in fostering sustainable lifestyles and regional climate action.

Way Forward

To address climate challenges, commitments must focus on integrating finance into national plans. Developing clear roadmaps with specific timelines and enhancing National Determined Contributions (NDCs) are crucial. Legislation should integrate climate considerations across sectors, and capacity building is vital, requiring training and resources. Additionally, fostering international cooperation for the transfer of climate-friendly technologies, particularly from developed to developing countries, is essential for collective progress.

COPs play a vital role in addressing climate change, and while the path forward presents challenges and promises, success hinges on collective determination, steadfast commitment, and an awareness of the high stakes involved. To secure a sustainable and resilient future, the global community can achieve this by embracing committed contributions and fostering authentic partnerships.



The Environmental Impact of Genetically Modified Crops

Genetically modified (GM) crop technology was extensively embraced for commercial use in 1996, primarily in corn, soybean, cotton, and canola crops. By 2018, 48% of global plantings for these four crops utilized biotechnology, with traits such as insect resistance (GM IR) and herbicide tolerance (GM HT) contributing to high yields, particularly in monocropping farm practices. While specialty crops less frequently employ GM technology, there's potential for addressing the global food crisis through its application in this context. The current food system faces sustainability challenges due to a growing world population, climate change, and crop pests.

The field of dietetics, situated at the intersection of nutrition, health, and sustainability, underscores the importance of understanding the global food system's current state and the technologies influencing it. GM crops undergo thorough evaluation for environmental effects before commercial release, involving assessments by developers and various regulatory bodies, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Research indicates potential drawbacks such as increased herbicide use and the development of herbicide-resistant weeds and concerns about negative impacts on the agricultural ecosystem, conflicting studies make interpretation challenging. Assessing the aggregate global impact of GM technology since its widespread adoption in 1996 reveals that on a global scale, it is not inherently harmful to the environment. In fact, GM technology has demonstrated positive effects, making it a valuable tool in fostering a sustainable food system.

GM IR and HT Technology

The most contentious aspect of research on GM crops revolves around their impact on herbicide use and the consequential effects on the environment. Divergent findings exist, with certain countries reporting a net reduction in herbicide use linked to the adoption of GM crops. An illustrative case is Canada, where the cultivation of GM herbicide-tolerant (HT) soybeans led to a consistent annual decrease in herbicide application compared to conventional equivalents, spanning from 1997 to 2018.

However, in other countries, the average amount of herbicide active ingredient applied to GM crops compared to their conventional equivalent represents a net increase. For example, from 2007 – 2014, GM HT soybean crop use in Brazil resulted in an average increase of 4,940,262 kilograms (kg) of herbicide. However, from 1997 – 2006, and from 2015 – 2018, the average volume of herbicides used in Brazil represented an average decrease.

This comparison stresses the importance of examining the aggregate impact of herbicide use over the entire time span of GM crop use. In this example, the aggregate global impact of GM HT soybeans represents a 0.1% increase in the change of active ingredient used, corresponding to an increase of 5 million kg used. Unlike this increase, the aggregate global amount of herbicide used on GM cotton, corn, and canola decreased from 1997-2018.

Even more so than GM HT crops, GM IR crops have had a significant positive impact on the environment. The use of GM IR technology effectively replaces the use of insecticides to control key crop pests. This is particularly evident in cotton as intensive treatment protocols are traditionally used to control bollworm/budworm pests. From 1996-2018, the aggregate impact of all countries growing GM IR cotton resulted in a net savings of 331 million kg of insecticide and a 34.2% improvement in EIQ. GM Soybeans and corn have also had similar positive environmental impacts on a global scale.

This research clearly shows that GM technology has had a positive environmental impact through a significant reduction in insecticide and herbicide use. Globally, since 1996, the use of pesticides (herbicide and insecticide combined) on GM crops has fallen by 8.3% which represents a savings of 775.4 million kg of active ingredient relative to the amount expected if the same crop area had been planted conventionally. As measured by EIQ indicator, this corresponds to an 18.5% improvement.

GM Insecticide Resistance

Similar to any approach in environmental management, there is apprehension about the potential negative impacts of GM crops on non-target species. These species include parasitoids and arthropod predators that play crucial roles in the ecosystem, especially in relation to crop plants. For instance, a study published in 1999 expressed worries that a *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) insect-resistant corn crop was adversely affecting Monarch butterfly larvae. It's worth noting that the study, though raising concerns, was conducted in a laboratory setting.

As one of the studies' author indicated: "Our study was conducted in the lab and, while it raises an important issue, it would be inappropriate to draw any conclusions about the risk to Monarch populations in the field solely on these initial results". In 2001, a follow up study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS) concluded that the impact of Bt corn on Monarch butterfly populations is negligible.

Over the 22 years of GM technology use, extensive laboratory and field-study research has been conducted to identify the non-target effects of IR crops. The vast majority of studies demonstrate that the insecticidal proteins utilized in IR seed production cause no unintended adverse effects to natural enemies. Furthermore, the replacement or reduction of chemical insecticide use associated with GM IR crops creates an environment supportive of the conservation of species in the agriculture ecosystem. When used as part of an overall integrated pest management (IPM) strategy, GM IR crops can contribute to more effective biological control of both target and non-target pests.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Significantly impacting the environment, changes in agricultural practices linked to GM crop utilization contribute to a notable reduction in fuel consumption and a consequent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. This impact is primarily attributed to fewer spray runs in GM insect-resistant (GM IR) crops and the transition from conventional tillage to reduced or no tillage farming systems facilitated by GM herbicide-tolerant (GM HT) crops.

Both of these agricultural practices result in decreased active time for fuel-dependent farm equipment. In 2018 alone, these practices led to a reduction in fuel usage by 920 million liters, resulting in a saving of 2,456 million kilograms of carbon dioxide. The cumulative reduction in fuel use from GM agriculture amounts to about 12,799 liters of fuel and 34,172 million kilograms of carbon dioxide. This level of fuel savings is equivalent to removing approximately 22.65 million cars from the road for a year.

The adoption of reduced tillage or no tillage practices associated with GM crops has also contributed to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This effect is due to the slower breakdown of plant residues associated with less soil tilling. Because the breakdown process is less rapid, more carbon is sequestered in the soil instead of being released to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. The estimated amount of soil carbon sequestered as a result of GM crops since 1996 is equivalent to 302,364 million kg of carbon dioxide. In addition to reducing gas emissions and improving soil carbon content, research indicates that reduced tillage practices also reduce soil erosion.

While there are many regulations in place to prevent GM crops from harming the environment, there is still potential for this technology to have a negative impact. Research does show that GM technology has led to the creation of HT weeds and is associated with a net increase of herbicide use on some crops in some regions. In many cases, these effects are due to human error in the application of this technology, not the technology itself.

In order to accurately determine the environmental impact of GM crops, it is important to look at the aggregate global impact. When examining the global environmental impact of GM crops, research clearly indicates that GM crops are not inherently dangerous to the environment. On a global scale, GM crops have actually had a positive impact on the environment.



Use of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare

According to Statista, the AI healthcare market, which was valued at \$11 billion in 2021, is expected to reach \$187 billion by 2030. This significant growth suggests substantial transformations in the operations of medical providers, hospitals, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, and others in the healthcare sector. The increased adoption of AI in healthcare is driven by improved ML algorithms, greater data accessibility, more affordable hardware, and the widespread availability of 5G technology. These advancements enable AI and ML technologies to efficiently analyze vast amounts of health data, including records, clinical studies, and genetic information, at a much faster pace than human capabilities.

AI could Help make Healthcare Operations more Efficient

AI is being employed by healthcare institutions to enhance the efficiency of a wide range of processes, spanning from administrative tasks to patient care. The following are some examples of how AI could be used to benefit staff and patients:

Administrative workflow: Healthcare workers spend a lot of time doing paperwork and other administrative tasks. AI and automation can help perform many of those mundane tasks, freeing up employee time for other activities and giving them more face-to-face time with patients. For example, generative AI can help clinicians with note-taking and content summarization that can help keep medical records as thorough as possible. AI could also help with accurate coding and sharing of information between departments and billing.

Virtual nursing assistants: One study found that 64% of patients are comfortable with the use of AI for around-the-clock access to answers that support nurses provide. AI virtual nurse assistants—which are AI-powered chatbots, apps or other interfaces—can be used to help answer questions about medications, forward reports to doctors or surgeons and help patients schedule a visit with a physician. These sorts of routine tasks can help take work off the hands of clinical staff, who can then spend more time directly on patient care, where human judgment and interaction matter most.

Dosage error reduction: AI could be used to help identify errors in how a patient self-administers medications. One example comes from a study in *Nature Medicine*, which found that up to 70% of patients don't take insulin as prescribed. An AI-powered tool that sits in the patient's background (much like a Wi-Fi router) could be used to flag errors in how the patient administers an insulin pen or inhaler.

Less invasive surgeries: AI-enabled robots could be used to work around sensitive organs and tissues to help reduce blood loss, infection risk and post-surgery pain.

Fraud prevention: Fraud in the healthcare industry is enormous, at \$380 billion/year, and raises the cost of consumers' medical premiums and out-of-pocket expenses. Implementing AI can help recognize unusual or suspicious patterns in insurance claims, such as billing for costly services or procedures not performed, unbundling (which is billing for the individual steps of a procedure as though they were separate procedures), and performing unnecessary tests to take advantage of insurance payments.

AI has the Potential to Improve the Healthcare user Experience

A recent study found that 83% of patients report poor communication as the worst part of their experience, demonstrating a strong need for clearer communication between patients and providers. AI technologies like natural language processing (NLP), predictive analytics and speech recognition could help healthcare providers have more effective communication with patients. AI could, for instance, deliver more specific information about a patient's treatment options, allowing the healthcare provider to have more meaningful conversations with the patient for shared decision-making.

AI could be used to Increase Efficiency in Healthcare Diagnoses

According to Harvard's School of Public Health, although it's early days for this use, using AI to make diagnoses may reduce treatment costs by up to 50% and improve health outcomes by 40%.

One use case example is out of the University of Hawaii, where a research team found that deploying deep learning AI technology can improve breast cancer risk prediction. More research is needed, but the lead researcher pointed out that an AI algorithm can be trained on a much larger set of images than a radiologist—as many as a million or more radiology images. Also, that algorithm can be replicated at no cost except for hardware.

An MIT group developed an ML algorithm to determine when a human expert is needed. In some instances, such as identifying cardiomegaly in chest X-rays, they found that a hybrid human-AI model produced the best results.

Another published study found that AI recognized skin cancer better than experienced doctors. US, German and French researchers used deep learning on more than 100,000 images to identify skin cancer. Comparing the results of AI to those of 58 international dermatologists, they found AI did better.

AI in Healthcare organizations could mean better Health Monitoring and Preventive Care

As health and fitness monitors become more popular and more people use apps that track and analyze details about their health, they can share these real-time data sets with their doctors to monitor health issues and provide alerts in case of problems.

AI solutions—such as big data applications, machine learning algorithms and deep learning algorithms—could also be used to help humans analyze large data sets to assist in clinical and other decision-making. AI could also be used to help detect and track infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, tuberculosis and malaria.

AI can help Connect Disparate Healthcare Data

One benefit the use of AI brings to health systems is making gathering and sharing information easier. AI can help providers keep track of patient data more efficiently.

One example is diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10% of the US population has diabetes. Patients can now use wearable and other monitoring devices that provide feedback about their glucose levels to themselves and their medical team. AI can help providers gather that information, store and analyze it, and provide data-driven insights from vast numbers of people. Leveraging this information can help healthcare professionals determine how to better treat and manage diseases.

Organizations are also starting to use AI to help improve drug safety. The company SELTA SQUARE, for example, is innovating the pharmacovigilance (PV) process, a legally mandated discipline for detecting and reporting adverse effects from drugs, then assessing, understanding and preventing those effects. PV demands significant effort and diligence from pharma producers because it's performed from the clinical trials phase all the way through the drug's lifetime availability. Selta Square uses a combination of AI and automation

to make the PV process faster and more accurate, which helps make medicines safer for people worldwide. In some cases, AI could reduce the need to test potential drug compounds physically, which is an enormous cost-savings. High-fidelity molecular simulations can run on computers without incurring the high costs of traditional discovery methods.

AI also has the potential to help humans predict toxicity, bioactivity, and other characteristics of molecules or create previously unknown drug molecules from scratch.

AI Governance in Healthcare

As AI becomes more important in healthcare delivery and more AI medical applications are developed, ethical and regulatory governance must be established. Issues that raise concern include the possibility of bias, lack of transparency, privacy concerns regarding data used for training AI models, and safety and liability issues.

“AI governance is necessary, especially for clinical applications of the technology,” said Laura Craft, VP Analyst at Gartner. “However, because new AI techniques are largely new territory for most [health delivery organizations], there is a lack of common rules, processes and guidelines for eager entrepreneurs to follow as they design their pilots.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) spent 18 months deliberating with leading experts in ethics, digital technology, law and human rights and various Ministries of Health members to produce a report called Ethics & Governance of Artificial Intelligence for Health. This report identifies ethical challenges to using AI in healthcare, identifies risks, and outlines six consensus principles to ensure AI works for the public's benefit:

- Protecting autonomy
- Promoting human safety and well-being
- Ensuring transparency
- Fostering accountability
- Ensuring equity
- Promoting tools that are responsive and sustainable

The WHO report also provides recommendations that ensure governing AI for healthcare both maximizes the technology's promise and holds healthcare workers accountable and responsive to the communities and people they work with.

Future and Potential of AI in the Healthcare Ecosystem

AI provides opportunities to help reduce human error, assist medical professionals and staff, and provide patient services 24/7. As AI tools continue to develop, there is potential to use AI even more in reading medical images, X-rays and scans, diagnosing medical problems and creating treatment plans.

AI applications will continue to help streamline various tasks, from answering phones to analyzing population health trends (and, likely, applications yet to be considered). For instance, future AI tools may automate or augment more of the work of clinicians and staff members. That will free up humans to spend more time on more effective and compassionate face-to-face professional care.



RAT-HOLE MINING

Recently, Rat Hole Mining method has been used to evacuate 41 workers who were trapped inside Uttarakhand's Silkyari tunnel.

Rat hole mining is a method of extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams. The term "rat hole" refers to the narrow pits dug into the ground, typically just large enough for one person to descend and extract coal. Once the pits are dug, miners descend using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach the coal seams. The coal is then manually extracted using primitive tools such as pickaxes, shovels, and baskets. Rat hole mining poses a variety of concerns, such as being unregulated, lacking safety measures, and linked to a host of ecological issues, such as the acidification of rivers, land degradation, deforestation, water pollution, etc.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned rat-hole mining in 2014 for being unscientific, but the practice continues to be rampant.



Events

National

MoUs & Agreements

IREDA signs MoU with Bank of Maharashtra



DATE: 21st September, 2023

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) has joined hands with Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in the field of renewable energy sector.

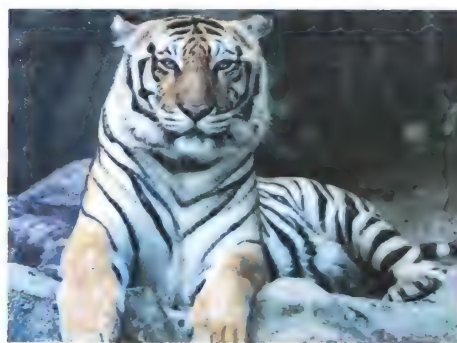
Key Points:

- The main objective of this collaboration is to promote and facilitate co-lending and loan syndication for a diverse spectrum of renewable energy projects across India.
- This initiative aligns with India's ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions and transition to clean and sustainable energy sources.
- The MoU was officially signed by Bharat Singh Rajput, General Manager (Technical Services) of IREDA, and Rajesh Singh, General Manager (Retail and MSME Credit) at Bank of Maharashtra.

- IREDA recognizes the substantial financing needs of the renewable energy sector, including emerging technologies such as green hydrogen and offshore wind.

Environment

"Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve" in MP



DATE: 25th September, 2023

The Madhya Pradesh government has unveiled the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve, becoming the seventh tiger reserve in the state and India's 54th.

Key Points:

- Madhya Pradesh retained "tiger state" status in the 2022 census, with the number of tigers in the state increasing from 526 in 2018 to 785.
- Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve is spread across Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is spread over an area of 2,339 square kilometers.

Polity & Governance

75% of Villages Declaring ODF Plus Status



DATE: 26th September, 2023

India's Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced that 75% of Indian villages, approximately 4.4 lakh, have achieved 'Open Defecation Free Plus' (ODF Plus) status, maintaining sanitation and waste management.

Key Points:

- He reported that 75% of Indian villages, totalling about 4.4 lakh, have attained the coveted 'Open Defecation Free Plus' (ODF Plus) status.
- This milestone signifies a crucial step toward fulfilling the goals of the second phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin by 2024-25.
- An 'ODF Plus' village is one that has not only maintained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status but has also successfully implemented either solid or liquid waste management systems.
- Over 4.43 lakh villages in India have voluntarily declared themselves as ODF Plus.

Environment

Bihar to get Second Tiger Reserve



DATE: 29th September, 2023

Bihar to get second tiger reserve in Kaimur district.

Key Points:

- After the Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) in West Champaran district, Bihar is set to get a second tiger reserve in Kaimur district (Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary) by the end of the year or early 2024.

- The total Tiger count in the State currently is 54.
- With the growing tiger population and concerted efforts by the State Forest Department, this new reserve is expected to bolster tiger conservation efforts and enrich the state's biodiversity.
- Kaimur district boasts a substantial forest cover, including the expansive Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary, which spans an area of 986 sq km.

Agriculture

Kisan Rin Portal



DATE: 29th September, 2023

FM Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the Kisan Rin portal, Ghar Ghar KCC campaign, and the Weather Information Network Data Systems, with the aim to promote financial inclusion in the agriculture sector.

Key Points:

- The portal is designed to serve as an **integrated hub** that offers a comprehensive view of crucial farmer-related information.
- The Kisan Rin portal will provide farmers with **easy access to vital data**, including loan disbursement specifics, interest subvention claims, and scheme utilization progress.
- This empowerment will enable farmers to make informed decisions about their financial matters.

Polity & Governance

'Swachhata Hi Seva' Campaign



DATE: 2nd October, 2023

The 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, initiated by Prime Minister on September 15 concluded on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary.

Key Points:

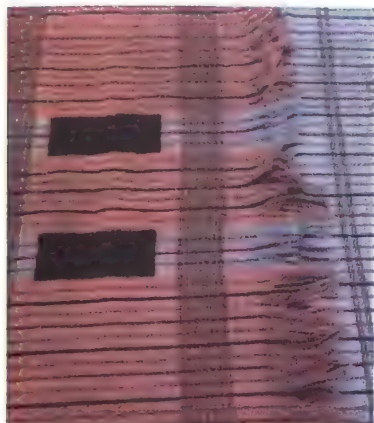
- The nationwide initiative, also known as the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, was led by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and garnered widespread participation from citizens across India.

- The day after concluding the mega cleanliness drive, India observed 'Swachh Bharat Diwas' on October 2, marking the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was a staunch advocate for cleanliness and sanitation.
- The theme for SHS-2023 was 'Garbage Free India,' with a particular focus on visual cleanliness and the welfare of SafaiMitras (sanitation workers).
- The special day serves as a reminder of the significance of maintaining cleanliness in our surroundings.

Trade & Commerce

Arunachal Pradesh Gets GI Tags for Three Products



DATE: 13th October, 2023

Arunachal Pradesh has recently received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Arunachal Yak Churpi, Khaw Tai (Khamti rice), and Tangsa textile.

Key Points:

- Arunachal Yak Churpi is derived from the milk of the Arunachali yak, a rare breed found primarily in the West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Khaw Tai, a chewy sticky rice variety, hails from the Namsai region and is cultivated by traditional Khampti tribal farmers.
- The Tangsa Textile products crafted by the Tangsa tribe of Changlang district are renowned for their exotic designs and vibrant colors.
- A geographical indication (GI) tag is a name or sign used on certain products that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
- Geographical indications are recognized as a part of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Articles

1(2) and 10 of the Paris Convention and also under Articles 22 to 24 of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.

Polity & Governance

National Waterways 44 (Ichamati River)



DATE: 14th October, 2023

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has initiated a significant dredging project on National Waterways 44, which includes the Ichamati River in West Bengal.

Key Points:

- The project aims to increase the navigational depth of the Ichamati River, ultimately boosting its capacity to manage tidal influences.
- The Ichamati River, serving as a boundary between India and Bangladesh, flows through both countries and has three distinct sections.
- Additionally, in the North 24-Parganas district in West Bengal, it forms an oxbow lake complex.
- National Waterways like Ichamati are essential for transportation, with India boasting 111 such inland waterways spanning a total of 14,500 kilometers.

Polity & Governance

Granting Habitat Rights



DATE: 14th October, 2023

Recently, the Chhattisgarh Government has granted habitat rights to its Baiga PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) right after the Kamar PVTG received habitat rights in August 2023.

Key Points:

- The Baiga PVTG became the second group to be granted these rights in Chhattisgarh.
- Chhattisgarh has seven PVTGs (Kamar, Baiga, Pahadi Korba, Abujmadiya, Birhor, Pando and Bhujia).
- The Baiga (means sorcerers) tribe mainly lives in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Traditionally, the Baiga lived a semi-nomadic life and practiced slash and burn cultivation. Now, they are mainly dependent on minor forest produce for their livelihood.

Infrastructure**Setu Bandhan Scheme**

DATE: 16th October, 2023

Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has disclosed the approval of seven crucial bridge projects in Arunachal Pradesh under the Setu Bandhan Scheme under Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF).

Key Points:

- The “Setu Bandhan Scheme” is a program initiated by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, aimed at facilitating the construction of Rail Over Bridges (ROBs), Rail Under Bridges (RUBs), and Bridges on State Roads.
- The projects, with a combined cost of Rs 118.50 Crores, are slated for implementation during the fiscal year 2023-24.
- The program is designed to enhance road safety by replacing existing level crossings with bridges, ultimately reducing accidents at these locations.

Employment**India Skills 2023-24**

DATE: 18th October, 2023

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, the Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, unveiled IndiaSkills 2023-24 and honored the World Skills 2022 Winners at an event in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- India, securing the **11th position** in the global competition last year, is now poised to make giant strides in skill development.
- The event witnessed the announcement of ambitious goals by Union Minister for Skill Development, **Dharmendra Pradhan**, emphasizing the need for a quantum leap in skill acquisition.
- Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan outlined the need to increase the number of participants from 0.25 million to **2.5 million**.
- This visionary step aims to provide impetus to the ecosystem of skill development and underscores the significance of competencies over traditional degrees.
- The minister emphasized the importance of **introducing employable skills**, which would enhance the market acceptance of the workforce.
- IndiaSkills serves as the precursor to the prestigious WorldSkills competition, a global platform for assessing and celebrating vocational excellence.
- India participated in **50 skills** at the WorldSkills 2022 competition, including new-age skills like robot system integration, additive manufacturing, industry 4.0, digital construction, mobile application development, and renewable energy.
- With its outstanding performance, India secured the 11th position, its best ranking to date since its participation began in 2007.

Defence**Raising Day of Indo-Tibetan Border Police**

DATE: 24th October, 2023

The Prime Minister Modi praised their unwavering determination and courage on Raising Day of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (24th October), acknowledging their vital role in protecting the nation's border security and integrity.

Key Points:

- The ITBP is a specialized mountain force of India, which was established on 24th October 1962, soon after the India-China war which was initially meant for deployment along the India-China border.
- ITBP was initially raised under the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Act, 1949.
- In 1992, parliament enacted the ITBP Act and the rules were framed in 1994.
- Over the years, ITBP has also been deployed for various internal security duties, including anti-Naxal operations.
- The force is known for its expertise in high-altitude rescue and mountaineering operations.

Information Technology

Kasturi Cotton Bharat



DATE: 25th October, 2023

Recently, the Union Minister of Textile, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution launched website of Kasturi Cotton Bharat.

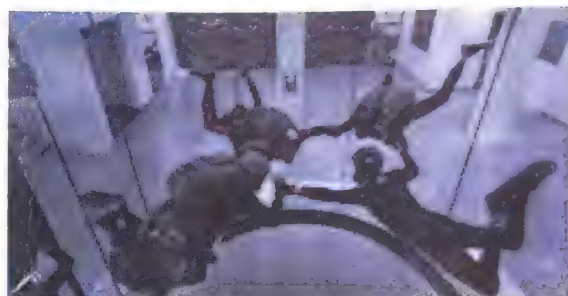
Key Points:

- It is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Textiles, the Cotton Corporation of India, Trade Bodies & Industry.
- The website provides a digital platform for necessary information and updates on this initiatives and highlights the registration process for ginners to produce Kasturi Cotton Bharat Brand.
- All the ginners in the country have been empowered to produce Kasturi Cotton Bharat brand as per stipulated protocol.

- Besides this, to provide complete traceability of Kasturi Cotton Bharat across the supply chain, QR based certification technology will be used at each stage of the processing and a blockchain based software platform will provide end to end traceability and transaction certificate.
- The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) the apex body has been designated as the implementing agency for Traceability, Certification and Branding of "KASTURI Cotton India".

Defence

First Vertical Wind Tunnel



DATE: 27th October, 2023

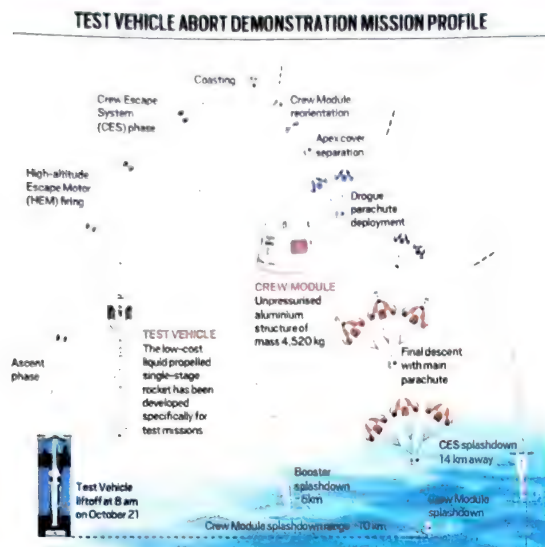
The Indian Army inaugurated its first Vertical Wind Tunnel (VWT) at the Special Forces Training School (SFTS) in Himachal Pradesh.

Key Points:

- The Vertical Wind Tunnel is a groundbreaking addition to Indian Army training, offering the special forces the tools they need to prepare for contemporary battlefields efficiently.
- The cutting-edge facility provides military trainees with a controlled environment to enhance their Combat Free Fall (CFF) skills by simulating real-life free fall conditions.
- The advanced wind tunnel is the first of its kind in the Indian Army and aims to revolutionize military training methods.
- The integration of the VWT into the training curriculum at SFTS marks a significant step in modernizing the Indian Army's training infrastructure.
- This initiative aligns with the ongoing efforts to infuse technology into training methodologies, ensuring that the armed forces are well-equipped to tackle the challenges of contemporary and future battlefields.

Space

Flight Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1)



DATE: 27th October, 2023

The **Flight Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1)** demonstrates the performance of the Crew Escape System of the Gaganyaan project.

Key Points:

- The ISRO plans to conduct a full-fledged crew module test flight in 2024 using the **human-rated LVM3 rocket**.
- The flight is the first of two abort missions to test the safety mechanisms that will allow the Gaganyaan crew to leave the spacecraft in an emergency.
- The Test Vehicle is a single-stage liquid rocket developed for this abort mission.
- The payloads consist of the Crew Module (CM) and Crew Escape Systems (CES) with their fast-acting solid motors, along with CM fairing (CMF) and Interface Adapters.
- The rocket, ISRO's new, low-cost Test Vehicle, will reach a peak relative velocity of 363 metres/ second (about 1307 km/ hr) during the flight and the crew module will be empty for the test.
- The test will check the functioning of systems for separating the crew module from the rocket in case of a mid-flight emergency (abort mission) and the escape of astronauts.
- The Test Vehicle will serve as a platform for testing and developing multiple space technologies, including Scramjet engine technology for reusable space launch vehicles.

- Recently, **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** carried out the first of a series of tests of systems and procedures called the **Flight Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1)** with the aim to ultimately fulfil the objectives of **Gaganyaan Mission** perhaps by 2025.

Banking

RBI's New Directive for Private Banks



DATE: 30th October, 2023

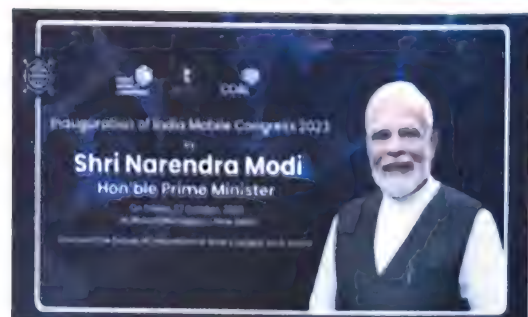
The RBI mandates private banks and foreign-owned subsidiaries to appoint a minimum of two Whole-Time Directors (WTDs) on their boards, including the MD & CEO, for improved senior management.

Key Points:

- In response to the evolving challenges and increasing intricacies within the banking sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a crucial circular.
- To address these concerns, the RBI has mandated that private banks and wholly-owned subsidiaries of foreign banks must have a minimum of two Whole-Time Directors (WTDs) on their boards.
- Banks that currently do not meet this minimum requirement are directed to submit their proposals for the appointment of WTD(s) within a period of four months.

Information Technology

7th Edition of Indian Mobile Congress (IMC)



DATE: 30th October, 2023

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the 7th Edition of the India Mobile Congress at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- The prestigious event brought together leading figures from the telecommunications industry to showcase cutting-edge technologies, discuss vital issues, and promote innovation.
- Akash Ambani introduced Reliance Jio's groundbreaking initiative – Space Fibre, India's first satellite-based giga fibre service capable of delivering internet speeds of up to 1 Gbps.
- Bharti Enterprises showcased the "future of innovation" with technologies like 5G Plus, AI-enabled tech, and other digital infrastructure solutions.
- During the event, Prime Minister Modi conferred awards upon 100 '5G Use Case Labs' established in educational institutions across India as part of the '100 5G Labs initiative.'
- The event is expected to host over one lakh participants from 22 countries, including approximately 5,000 CEO-level delegates, 230 exhibitors, 400 startups, and various stakeholders.

Defence

25T Bollard Pull Tug 'MAHABALI'



DATE: 30th October, 2023

Indian Navy launched 25T Bollard Pull Tug, named 'Mahabali,' to provide assistance to naval ships and submarines, offer firefighting support to ships and conduct limited Search and Rescue Operations.

Key Points:

- Commodore **Sunil Kaushik**, launched the remarkable vessel, the 25T Bollard Pull Tug named 'Mahabali,' on the 28th of October 2023 at M/s Shoft Shipyard Pvt Ltd in Bharuch, Gujarat.
- This launch not only represented a new addition to India's naval fleet but also a significant milestone in the 'Make in India' initiative of the Ministry of Defence.

- The construction and delivery of the 'Mahabali' and two other **25T BP Tugs** were the result of a concluded contract with M/s Shoft Shipyard Pvt Ltd. (SSPL).
- The Tugs are also equipped to provide afloat firefighting assistance to ships alongside and at anchorage.

Social

Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)



Cabinet Decisions (17 October 2023)

MERA YUVA BHARAT

Cabinet approves establishment of an autonomous body Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)

- It will serve as an overarching enabling mechanism powered by technology for youth development
- It seeks to harness the immense youth energy for nation building by enabling youth to act as Yuva Setu between the Government and the citizens.

DATE: 1st November, 2023

Recently, Prime Minister Modi launched the 'Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat)' platform aiming to be a technology-driven facilitator for youth development and youth-led development.

Key Points:

- MY Bharat will benefit the youth in the age group of 15-29 years, in line with the definition of 'Youth' in the National Youth Policy.
- In case of programme components specifically meant for the adolescents, the beneficiaries will be in the age group of 10-19 years.
- It is a 'Phygital Platform' (physical + digital) comprising physical activity along with an opportunity to connect digitally.
- It envisions a framework where the youth of our country can seamlessly connect with programs, mentors, and their local communities.
- This engagement is designed to deepen their understanding of local issues and empower them to contribute to constructive solutions.

Polity & Governance

Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment (ENCORE)



DATE: 2nd November, 2023

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has developed an in-house software named 'ENCORE,' which stands for Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment.

Key Points:

- ENCORE is a comprehensive software suite designed for efficient candidate and election management, offering a range of features for smooth operations during the electoral process.
- ENCORE provides a seamless and integrated platform for Returning Officers to manage various election-related tasks, from candidate nomination to voter turnout tracking, counting of votes, result compilation, and data management.
- Allowing Returning Officers to conduct online scrutiny of candidate nominations.
- Providing candidates with the convenience of online nomination and affidavit submission.
- Displaying detailed information about a candidate's financial assets and liabilities.
- Facilitating coordination with various departments, including fire, education, police, environment, and CPWD.

Social

QR codes on food products for visually impaired



DATE: 3rd November, 2023

Recently, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recommended the inclusion of QR codes on food products for accessibility by visually impaired individuals stating that this will ensure Access to Safe Food for all.

Key Points:

- The FSSAI in 2019 proposed the Front-of-Pack Labelling (FOPL), a key strategy to alert and educate consumers in making an informed choice.
- A QR (Quick Response) code is a type of two-dimensional matrix barcode that can store various types of data, such as alphanumeric text, website URLs, contact information, and more.
- The Recommendations are consistent with the FSSAI's Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020.
- By including QR codes for accessibility by visually impaired individuals, the move is in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- It promotes inclusivity and equal access to essential information.
- These codes can be scanned using Smart phone applications, which can then read out the information to the user.
- The inclusion of QR codes on food products in India is a significant step toward improving public health, enhancing consumer protection, and promoting inclusivity.

Healthcare

NMC's One Nation One Registration Platform



सत्यमेव जयते

राष्ट्रीय आयुर्विज्ञान आयोग

National Medical
Commission

DATE: 4th November, 2023

The National Medical Commission (NMC) plans to transform India's medical registration system with the 'One Nation, One Registration Platform' for easy access to medical practitioner information.

Key Points:

- The NMC's initiative aims to eliminate duplication and bureaucratic hurdles, offering public access to information about every physician in India.
- A National Medical Register (NMR) patch pilot will provide doctors with unique identification numbers for cross-state practice.
- A masked ID will be assigned to undergraduate students, which will be unmasked upon course completion, facilitating qualification updates and cross-state licensing.
- The NMR will centralize data on doctors, including qualifications, registration dates, specialties, and more, streamlining accessibility.
- The NMC also outlines processes for additional qualifications, license renewal, and appeal options for rejected applications.

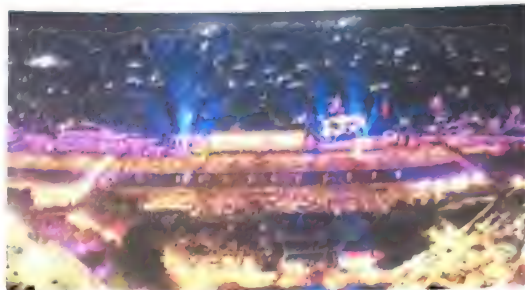
Social**'Bharat Atta'**

DATE: 8th November, 2023

Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal, launched a significant initiative to provide affordable wheat flour to consumers under the 'Bharat' brand.

Key Points:

- The initiative aims to offer a cost-effective alternative to the market prices, contribute to price moderation, and support the welfare of ordinary consumers.
- The launch of 'Bharat' Atta is a significant step in the government's commitment to support farmers and ensure essential commodities remain affordable for consumers.
- Under the 'Bharat' brand, Piyush Goyal has initiated the sale of wheat flour (Atta) at prices not exceeding ₹ 27.50 per kilogram.

Ayodhya Sets Guinness Record by Lighting 22 Lakh Diyas

DATE: 10th November, 2023

The seventh Deepotsav in Ayodhya set a new world record by emerging as the largest event of lighting lamps together at one location, with over 22 lakh 'diyas' illuminated along the Saryu river.

Key Points:

- Upon receiving the certificate from the Guinness Book of World Records, **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** extended warm greetings to the entire Ayodhya and its resident.
- Since the **BJP** came to power in **Uttar Pradesh in 2017**, Deepotsav has evolved into a major event in the state, attracting larger crowds and more significant participation each year.
- CM Adityanath, Governor **Anandiben Patel**, and other cabinet members actively participated in the event, lighting lamps and performing prayers at the banks of the **Saryu River**.

Environment**Pusa-2090 Alternative to Pusa-44**

DATE: 10th November, 2023

With the Supreme Court emphasizing the need to cease stubble burning in **states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan**, the discussion surrounding **Pusa-2090** rice variety from its ability to provide an alternative to the **problematic long-duration Pusa-44 variety**.

Key Points:

- Pusa-44, a long-duration paddy variety bred by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), has been a key contributor to stubble burning.
- Its growth cycle of 155-160 days, from nursery sowing to harvesting, leads to late October maturity, leaving a short window for field preparation for the next crop.
- Due to time constraints, farmers resort to burning the stubble, causing severe environmental issues.
- Despite its longer duration, the high-yielding nature of Pusa-44, averaging 35-36 quintals an acre, makes it popular among farmers.
- IARI has developed Pusa-2090, an improved version derived from a cross between Pusa-44 and CB-501, an early-maturing Japonica rice line.
- It matures in a shorter duration of 120-125 days while maintaining comparable yields, addressing the core issue of stubble burning.
- It combines the high yield attributes of Pusa-44 with the quicker maturation cycle of CB-501, making it a promising alternative.

Trade & Commerce

ISA Steel Conclave 2023



DATE: 12th November, 2023

Recently, the 4th edition of 'ISA Steel Conclave 2023' was held, nudging **Steel Firms** to ramp up their capacities so that India's output of the **critical infrastructure input doubles to 300 million tonnes a year by 2030**.

Key Points:

- The event was marked by discussions on the theme, '**Steel Shaping The Sustainable Future**,' underscoring the multifaceted role of the steel industry in India's growth and development.
- India is the world's second-largest producer of crude steel, with an output of 125.32 million tonnes (MT) of crude steel and 121.29 MT of finished steel production in FY23.

- The steel industry in India has experienced substantial growth in the past decade, with a 75% increase in production since 2008.
- The per-capita consumption of steel in India stood at 86.7 kilograms in FY23.
- As per the **National Steel policy**, launched in 2017, India projects crude steel capacity of 300 million tonnes (MT), production of 255 MT and a robust finished steel per capita consumption of 158 Kgs by 2030-31.

Education

UGC Regulations Open Doors for Foreign Universities in India



DATE: 13th November, 2023

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently released regulations that pave the way for foreign universities, ranked among the world's top 500, to establish branch campuses in India.

Key Points:

- **Two or more** foreign universities can **collaborate** to establish campuses in India.
- International faculty appointed for Indian campuses must commit to staying in the **country for a minimum of one semester**.
- The time for the standing committee to process applications has been **extended from 45 to 60 days**.
- Foreign universities are permitted to decide their admission process, fee structure, and also repatriate funds to their parent campuses.
- Programs **cannot be offered online or in Open and Distance Learning** modes under these regulations.
- Foreign universities are **exempt from paying annual fees to the UGC**, except for a one-time application fee.
- Foreign universities are encouraged to provide **full or partial merit-based and need-based scholarships and fee concessions to Indian students**.

Polity & Governance

Bihar Assembly Passes Bill to Increase Reservation Quota



DATE: 13th November, 2023

The Bihar Assembly has unanimously passed a bill to elevate reservation quotas in educational institutions and government jobs for various communities.

Key Points:

- The overall reservation quota for **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** has been raised from **50% to 65%**.
- With the existing 10% quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), the effective reservation becomes 75%.
- The bill emphasizes inclusive growth and aims to address societal inequalities.
- The proposed changes align with the caste survey report, providing a strategic direction for policy reform.
- The Bill is set to be presented in the Legislative Council, with expectations of unanimous approval.

Rural & Urban development

India's Smart city Mission

DATE: 14th November, 2023

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' latest data, as of 3rd November 2023, provides insights into the **status of India's Smart Cities Mission**.



Smart City

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Key Points:

- Surat (Gujarat) emerges as the top-performing city, leading in the completion of projects, fund utilization, and overall criteria.
- Agra (Uttar Pradesh), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Varanasi (UP), and Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) secure positions in the top five cities, showcasing commendable progress.

- The rest of the top 10 include Tumakuru (Karnataka), Udaipur (Rajasthan), Madurai (Tamil Nadu), Kota (Rajasthan) and Shivamogga (Karnataka).
- About 22% of total projects (1,745 of 7,947) that account for 33% out of ₹ 1.70 lakh crore) of the total cost are still ongoing.
- The majority of projects (6,202) have been completed, emphasizing the scale and financial investment involved.

Polity & Governance

Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra

**VIKSIT BHARAT
SANKALP YATRA**



DATE: 14th November, 2023

On Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, Prime Minister Modi is set to launch the PM-PVTG Mission and Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra, for holistic development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Key Points:

- PM JANMAN aims to **protect and nurture tribal groups**, especially those on the verge of extinction, by providing them with necessary support, development, and connectivity to mainstream services and opportunities.
- The initiative covers 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) residing in 18 states and union territories, spread across 22,544 villages in 220 districts.
- PM JANMAN underscores the government's commitment to uplifting and safeguarding tribal communities, preserving their cultural heritage, and integrating them into the mainstream development process.
- The focus of the Yatra will be on reaching out to people, creating awareness and providing benefits of welfare schemes like sanitation facilities, essential financial services, electricity connections, access to LPG cylinders, Housing for the poor, food security, proper nutrition, reliable healthcare, clean drinking water, etc.
- The PM-PVTG Development Mission program aims to improve the socio-economic status of **Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.

Art & Culture

Uttarakhand's Products Get Geographical Indication Tags



DATE: 21st November, 2023

In a significant recognition of Uttarakhand's rich and diverse heritage, the **Geographical Indications (GI) Registry** has bestowed the coveted GI tags upon more than 15 products from the state.

Key Points:

- Uttarakhand's Berinag tea, crafted from the leaves of a plant that thrives in the Himalayan wilderness, has earned a spot on the list.
- The recognition extends to Bichhu buti fabrics, made from Himalayan nettle fibers.
- Uttarakhand's finger millet, known as Mandua, has been an integral part of the local diet in Garhwal and Kumaon.
- Another homegrown millet, Jhangora, found in the rain-fed areas of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand, now carries the GI tag.
- Gahat, a crucial pulse thriving in the dry regions of Uttarakhand, has been granted a GI tag.
- Organically grown in the Purola region, Uttarakhand Lal Chawal, a red rice variant, now proudly carries the GI tag.

Social

Nayi Chetna 2.0



DATE: 22nd November, 2023

In an inter-ministerial meeting which saw participation of nine line ministries, DAY-NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission), Ministry of Rural Development announced its plans for the second year of its National Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence – 'Nayi Chetna – 2.0'.

Key Points:

- The campaign is to be launched on 25 November which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- It will be observed across 34 Indian states and UTs till 23 December.
- The annual campaign will be led by DAY-NRLM's self-help groups network of over 9.8 crore rural women members with the spirit of a *Jan Andolan* or people's movement.
- Data from NFHS – 5 show that more than 77% women still do not report or talk about their experience of violence.
- Such findings, as well as experiences of violence of women SHG members across the country is what encouraged this initiative.
- The Nayi Chetna Campaign aims to advance the rights of women and gender-diverse individuals, for a life without fear, and gender-based discrimination and violence.
- Campaign activities will deepen awareness on gender-based violence (GBV) amongst self-help group members and encourage GBV reporting.
- It will also address social norms which sanction and help such forms of violence to prevail.

Social

UP Govt Launches Safe City Project



DATE: 22nd November 2023

The Uttar Pradesh government has initiated the Safe City Project, a comprehensive surveillance initiative aimed at bolstering security.

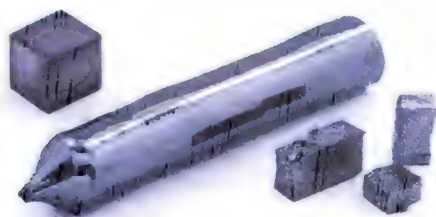
Key Points:

- As part of the Safe City Project, the government has identified 17 municipal corporations and 2500 schools in Gautam Buddha Nagar for the installation of CCTV cameras.
- Under the project, 5,505 cameras have been installed in 162 higher educational institutions, comprising state degree/PG colleges, aided degree/PG colleges, unaided degree/PG colleges, and state universities. The comprehensive surveillance covers classrooms and key areas in these institutions.

- Private coaching institutes in Gautam Buddha Nagar are under close scrutiny to prevent potential disturbances and incidents of molestation.
- The CCTV cameras installed in schools, colleges, and coaching institutes will be integrated with the control room of the smart city by the Urban Development Department.

Science & Technology

Rare Metal Tantalum Discovered in Punjab Soil



DATE: 22nd November 2023

A team led by Dr. Resmi Sebastian, assistant professor at the institute's Civil Engineering Department, has discovered tantalum, a rare metal, in Punjab soil.

Key Points:

- This discovery holds significance not only for Punjab but for India, given tantalum's widespread use in electronics and semiconductors.
- Tantalum, with the atomic number 73, is a grey, heavy, and highly corrosion-resistant metal. It is known for its hardness and ductility, allowing it to be stretched into thin wires without breaking.
- Uses of Tantalum
 - Electronics: Tantalum capacitors are crucial in electronic devices, storing more electricity in smaller sizes without leakage.
 - Substitute for Platinum: Tantalum's high melting point makes it a cost-effective substitute for platinum in various applications.
 - Industrial Applications: Used in chemical plants, nuclear power plants, aircraft, missiles, and surgical equipment.
 - Cutting-Edge Material: Composite materials like tantalum carbide (TaC) and graphite, known for extreme hardness, are used in high-speed machine tool cutting edges.

Conferences & Summits

Bengal Global Business Summit 2023



DATE: 22nd November 2023

Chief Minister revealed a comprehensive set of policies aimed at propelling the state's economic growth at the Bengal Global Business Summit 2023.

Key Points:

- The policies encompass a diverse range of initiatives, from doubling exports to fostering renewable energy manufacturing and upgrading logistics.
- Key Initiatives Unveiled
 1. Export Doubling Strategy
 2. Logistics Modernization
 3. Renewable Energy Promotion
 4. Bio-Fuels Promotion
 5. Strengthening Internet Connectivity
- To address the need for improved internet connectivity in the eastern region, a new sub-sea cable landing station at the sea-resort of Digha was revealed, reflecting Bengal's focus on technological advancement.

Environment

Gujarat Chooses the Ghol as the State Fish



DATE: 23rd November 2023

The Gujarat government has selected the ghol as its official state fish, emphasizing both its economic importance and distinctiveness.

Key points:

- This decision is part of the state's commitment to contribute to the conservation of this rare fish species, primarily found in the vast Indo-Pacific region extending from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific Ocean.
- Although not widely consumed locally due to its high cost, the ghol holds substantial commercial importance.
- The ghol's meat is exported as frozen fillet or whole fish to European and Middle-Eastern countries.
- The economic allure of the ghol is evident in its market prices. In Gujarat, a kilogram of ghol can fetch anywhere between Rs5,000 to Rs15,000.

Healthcare**CCRAS Launches "Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative" (AGNI)****DATE:** 23rd November 2023

The Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS), under the Ministry of Ayush, has introduced the "Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative" (AGNI) to bolster research, scientific validation, and evidence-based practices in Ayurveda.

Key Points:

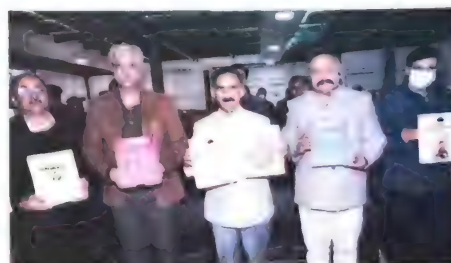
- The initiative aims to create a platform for Ayurveda practitioners to share their innovative practices and experiences in treating various disease conditions.
- Ayurveda practitioners can submit their Expression of Interest using the format available on the CCRAS website.
- The initiative plans to document and publish reported medical practices and therapeutic regimens for educational and academic purposes in consultation with the National Council for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCISM).
- With over 500,000 registered Ayurveda practitioners, AGNI aims to harness the wealth of knowledge and experience within the Ayurveda community.

Polity & Governance**Stricter Age Verification for Social Media****DATE:** 24th November, 2023

The Indian government is developing a comprehensive "risk-based" frame-work to enforce age-gating on social media and other internet intermediaries, requiring users to access these services only with parental consent.

Key Points:

- The age-verification framework will operate within the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which defines users below 18 as children.
- Various methods are under consideration for age verification, including the use of documents saved in DigiLocker, an Aadhaar-based process, a digital token, or an app store-level verification.
- Social media platforms are expected to adhere to stricter age-gating measures due to the higher risk of inappropriate interactions involving minors.
- The DPDP Act prohibits processing data of underage users without parental consent, aiming to enhance the protection of minors online.

Education**Vidya Samiksha Kendra****DATE:** 24th November 2023

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister inaugurated the Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) in Shimla.

Key Points:

- VSK will serve as a comprehensive data repository, collecting information from all schemes run by the Ministry of Education (MoE).

- Vidya Samiksha Kendra was approved under the (STARS) Project, covering Himachal Pradesh, along with Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- The SwiftChat platform, featuring multiple AI chatbots, will play a pivotal role in the functionality of VSK.
- VSK will present real-time dashboards and reports at the district, block, and individual school levels.

Polity & Governance

Exclusion of CERT-In from RTI Ambit



DATE: 27th November 2023

The Central government has recently included the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in the list of organizations exempted from the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005.

Key points:

- CERT-In, the national agency responsible for responding to computer security incidents falls under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- CERT-In plays a pivotal role in responding to computer security incidents promptly. Among its key objectives is the enhancement of security awareness among common citizens.
- The RTI Act, enacted in 2005, exempts certain intelligence and security organizations from its purview. This exemption includes entities listed in the Second Schedule, with a provision excluding information related to allegations of corruption and human rights violations.

Social

Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children



DATE: 28th November 2023

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is gearing up for a significant national event to introduce the Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children.

Key Points:

- This initiative is a crucial component of the Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi program, falling under Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0.
- A key highlight of the event will be a panel discussion focusing on strategies for early identification, screening, and inclusion at Anganwadi Centres.
- The primary goal of the event is to underscore the importance and feasibility of enhancing children's well-being through early intervention and specialized support.
- A vital aspect of the initiative is educating and supporting families and communities to enhance the participation of Divyang children in family and community life.
- The event aligns with the National Education Policy 2020, emphasizing the integration of Divyang students into mainstream schools rather than establishing segregated institutions.

Science & Technology

Rat-Hole Mining in Uttarkashi Tunnel Collapse



DATE: 28th November 2023

Efforts to rescue 41 workers trapped in the collapsed Silkyara-Barkot tunnel face setbacks as drilling machinery breaks down. In response, rescuers turn to rat-hole mining to reach the stranded workers.

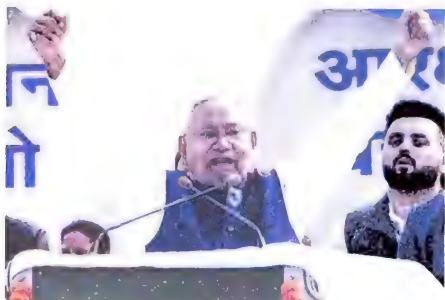
Key Points:

- After encountering a major setback with the drilling machinery breaking down, rescuers at the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel are adopting an unconventional approach – rat-hole mining.
- The machine drilling through the debris faced challenges due to a broken auger joint, prompting rescuers to explore alternative methods.

- Rat-hole mining is a unique method primarily used for extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams, especially prevalent in Meghalaya.
- Despite its historical use, rat-hole mining poses significant safety and environmental hazards.

Polity & Governance

Bihar's Call for Special Category Status (SCS)



DATE: 28th November 2023

On November 22, the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led Cabinet took a significant step by passing a resolution urging the Centre to grant special category status (SCS) to Bihar.

Key Points:

- This demand is grounded in the findings of the "Bihar Caste-based Survey, 2022," revealing that almost one-third of Bihar's population continues to grapple with poverty.
- Special Category Status (SCS) is a classification bestowed by the Centre to aid the development of states facing geographical or socio-economic disadvantages.
- Introduced in 1969 on the recommendation of the fifth Finance Commission, SCS considers factors such as hilly terrain, low population density, strategic location along international borders, economic and infrastructural backwardness, and non-viable state finances before its grant.
- Historically, SCS states received grants under the Gadgil-Mukherjee formula, allocating nearly 30% of total central assistance to them.
- But Changes post the abolition of the Planning Commission and recommendations of the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions altered this landscape.

Raas Mahotsav in Assam



DATE: 29th November 2023

The enchanting annual Raas Mahotsav has unfolded its divine festivities in Majuli, Assam, making it the perfect destination to immerse oneself in the bhakti (devotion) of Lord Krishna.

Key Points:

- Majuli, the world's largest inhabited river island nestled in the mighty Brahmaputra, is the heart of Assamese Neo-Vaishnavism.
- The island is adorned with Vaishnavite monasteries known as Satras, and the Raas festival is celebrated with grandeur, preserving the pure essence of the event.
- The locals engage in Bhaona, a traditional form of drama initiated in the fifteenth or sixteenth century by the esteemed figure Srimanta Sankardeva.
- For centuries, the people of Majuli have followed the tradition of paying homage to Lord Krishna through the enactment of his Raas Leela.

Environment

Saurauia Pundwana: A Rare Discovery in Manipur



DATE: 29th November 2023

The Saurauia Pundwana, categorized as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, has been found for the first time in Manipur's Tamenglong district.

Key Points:

- This discovery was made during a recent Rapid Biodiversity Assessment (RBA) field survey conducted within the Longku forest of Dailing village.
- The Saurauia Punduana plant, native to the region stretching from Bhutan to Southeastern Tibet, displays unique characteristics.
- Its flowers transition from white to pink as they mature, with pink, ovate to obovate petals curled at the tip. The plant's spherical, shining white fruits are employed in veterinary medicine.

Polity & Governance**Terms of Reference of the Sixteenth Finance Commission**

सत्यमेव जयते

16th Finance Commission

DATE : 30th November 2023

The Union Cabinet, under the guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the Terms of Reference of the Sixteenth Finance Commission.

Key points:

- The recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission, once accepted by the government, will span a period of five years, beginning on April 1, 2026.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission, constituted on November 27, 2017, had recommendations valid up to the financial year 2025-26.
- The Sixteenth Finance Commission will provide recommendations on:
 - Distribution of Net Proceeds of Taxes:
 - It also addresses the allocation of respective shares of these proceeds among the States.
 - Grants-in-Aid Principles:
 - Resource Augmentation for States:
 - Review of Disaster Management Financing:
 - Timeline and Background
- The report of the Sixteenth Finance Commission is expected to be available by October 31, 2025, covering a five-year period starting April 1, 2026.

Art & Culture**Jal Itihas Utsav****DATE:** 2nd December, 2023

The National Water Mission hosted 'Jal Itihas Utsav' in Delhi to raise awareness about safeguarding water heritage, instil ownership, and contribute to historical structure restoration.

Key Points:

- The 'Jal Itihas Utsav' marked the culmination of the "Water Heritage Fortnight," celebrated nationwide from November 15 to November 30, 2023, at 75 'Natural Water Heritage Structures.'
- It also marked the successful conclusion of the nationwide campaign 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' in 2023.
- The campaign, themed "Source Sustainability for Drinking Water," aimed to prepare communities for the rainy season, encourage rainwater harvesting, and ensure the sustainability of drinking water sources.
- The focus was particularly on 150 Water Stressed Districts identified by the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Reports & Indices**Pulses, Oil seeds, Fruit Output to lag demand till 2030-31****DATE:** 2nd December, 2023

As per the report published by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), commodities like

oilseed, pulses and fruits are expected to experience a supply and demand gap in the coming years.

Key Points:

- There is a need to increase the level of production and productivity of oilseeds, pulses, and fruits since their demand in the future shows an increasing trend.
- As per capita incomes rise, the consumption basket of people tends to diversify towards nutritious and high-valued commodities, including fruits and vegetables and dairy products and away from staples such as rice and cereals.
- Oil seeds production is expected to rise to around 35 to 40 million tonnes (MT) by 2030-31, with the gap between demand and supply likely to expand to 3 MT by 2025-26.

Healthcare

'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube'



DATE: 3rd December, 2023

The world's first portable hospital, 'Aarogya Maitri Aid Cube', was unveiled recently in Gurugram.

Key Points:

- It is the world's first portable hospital.
- Designed indigenously under Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri), the modular trauma management and aid system is made up of 72 detachable mini-cubes, each being a specialized station for emergency response and humanitarian efforts.
- It contains medical equipment and supplies such as a mini-ICU, an operation theatre, cooking station, food, water, a power generator, blood test equipment, an X-ray machine, and more.
- The cubes are capable of handling patients with severe injuries up to 25 major burns, long limb fractures, chest injuries, spinal injuries and approximately 10 head injuries.
- It can treat as many as 200 patients.
- These cubes are light and portable, and can be rapidly deployed anywhere, from airdrops to ground transportation.

Internal Security

Peace Agreement between Govt & UNLF

DATE: 4th December, 2023

Recently, The Government of India and Government of Manipur signed a Peace Agreement with United National Liberation Front (UNLF) which is oldest valley-based insurgent group of Manipur.



Key Points:

- The UNLF was formed in 1964, and is distinct from the insurgent groups active in the state's Naga-dominated and Kuki-Zomi dominated hills.
- The UNLF is one of the seven "Meitei Extremist Organisations" banned by the Union government under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.
- The UNLF has been operating both within and outside Indian Territory.
- It is believed that the UNLF initially received training from the NSCN (IM), the largest insurgent group among the Naga factions.
- It operates in all the valley areas of Manipur and some villages in the Kuki-Zomi hill districts.
- It is a banned group. It mostly operates from camps and training bases in Myanmar's Sagaing Region, Chin State, and Rakhine State, with support from the Myanmar military.

Polity & Governance

Assembly Elections



DATE: 5th December, 2023

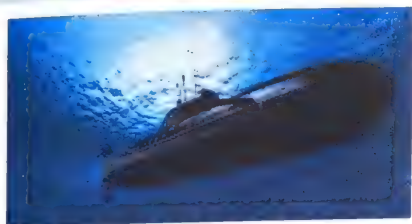
The Election Commission of India announced elections to the state assemblies of five states – Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Mizoram – on October 9.

Key Points:

- Mizoram will have poll on November 7.
- Chhattisgarh will have a two-phase election on November 7 and 17.
- Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana will have polls on November 17, November 23 and November 30 respectively.
- The BJP emerged victorious in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, dealing a substantial blow to the Congress and consolidating its control in the Hindi heartland.
- The Congress emerged victorious in Telangana.

Defence

Three Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships for Indian Navy



DATE: 6th December, 2023

The Cochin Shipyard unveiled the first three of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) shallow water crafts commissioned for the Indian Navy - INS Mahe, INS Malvan, and INS Mangrol.

Key Points:

- These ships are poised to replace the Abhay class ASW corvettes and excel in anti-submarine operations, coastal defence, mine laying, and sub-surface surveillance.
- They demonstrate a high-speed capability of 25 knots, an endurance of 1,800 nautical miles, and are designed to undertake coordinated ASW operations with aircraft while being adept at search and rescue missions.

Economy

Accelerated Growth of the Core Sector

Eight Core Industries (Weightage)



DATE: 6th December, 2023

India's core sectors grew 12.1% in October from a revised uptick of 9.2% in September.

Key Points:

- All eight sectors clocking positive growth for only the third time in 18 months, and five of them recording a double-digit surge.
- The core sectors constitute little over 40% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- A rise in power generation signals strong economic activity supported by the coal sector. The Industrial Production (IIP) growth for October is anticipated to be between 6% and 8%, depending on consumer goods performance.
- Fertilizer production has risen in anticipation of Rabi crop sowing this month, while the cement industry has experienced growth due to both a negative base effect and an upturn in the housing sector.

Agriculture

Lakadong turmeric



DATE: 6th December, 2023

Recently, Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Key Points:

- It is considered to be one of the world's best varieties of turmeric, with a curcumin content of around 6.8 to 7.5 per cent.
- It is darker in colour and is grown organically without the use of fertilisers.
- It is found in Lakadong area of Jaintia Hills, has high curcumin content.
- Other GI products from Meghalaya: Garo Dakmanda (traditional dress), Larnai pottery and Garo Chubitchi (alcoholic beverage) were also awarded the GI tag.

Polity & Governance

Gram Manchitra



DATE: 6th December, 2023

Panchayati Raj Ministry launched 'Gram Manchitra' GIS app, empowering Gram Panchayats for efficient grassroots spatial planning, fostering active participation in the process.

Key Points:

- The Gram Manchitra application serves as a single and unified Geo-Spatial platform.
- This platform is instrumental in facilitating decision-making processes related to the GPD.
- It empowers Gram Panchayats to visualize developmental works across diverse sectors in a comprehensive manner.
- Gram Manchitra goes beyond visualization by providing a robust decision support system.
- It equips Gram Panchayat officials with planning tools that utilize GIS technology.

Tourism

National Best Tourism Village Competition



DATE: 8th December, 2023

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has announced the National Best Tourism Village Competition 2024 and the National Best Rural Home stay Competition 2024.

Key Points:

- Building on the success of the previous edition in 2023, where 25 villages were recognized for their excellence, these competitions aim to strengthen rural economies and foster community involvement.
- The initiative is part of the comprehensive National Strategy and Roadmap for the Development of Rural Tourism in India.

- The Ministry, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, has undertaken strategic initiatives outlined in the National Strategy and Roadmap.
- These initiatives include the National Best Tourism Village and National Best Home stays Competitions.
- The goal is to create a conducive environment for Rural Tourism growth by actively engaging governments, industry stakeholders, NGOs and local communities.

Defence

Tejas Jets and Prachand Helicopters



DATE: 8th December, 2023

Recently, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has sanctioned Rs 2.23 lakh crore for the procurement of 97 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (Mark 1A) and 156 Prachand Light Combat Helicopters (LCH), underscoring India's commitment to bolster its armed forces' combat capabilities.

Key Points:

- The LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters with a considerable load of weapons and fuel.
- The helicopter uses radar-absorbing material to lower radar signature and has a significantly crash-proof structure and landing gear.
- The helicopter is equipped with a countermeasure dispensing system that protects it from enemy radars or infrared seekers of enemy missiles.
- The procurement plan aims to source 98% of its total needs from domestic industries, providing a significant boost to the Indian defence industry in its pursuit of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance).
- The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air Force to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).
- The LCA programme was started by the Government of India in 1984 when they established the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) to manage the LCA programme.

Conferences & Summits

MAHASAGAR Initiative

DATE: 9th December, 2023

Recently, the first session of MAHASAGAR, the Indian Navy's initiative, brought together maritime leaders from diverse nations within the Indian Ocean Region.



Key Points:

- Theme: 'Collective Maritime Approach towards Countering Common Challenges'.
- MAHASAGAR stands for Maritime Heads for Active Security And Growth for All in the Region.
- It aims to create a platform for high-level interactions fostering cooperation among IOR nations.
- MAHASAGAR resonates with the Indian Government's SAGAR vision (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

Law & Justice

Supreme Court Upholds Abrogation of Article 370



DATE: 11th December, 2023

The Supreme Court upheld the 2019 revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370.

Key Points:

- The judgment, delivered by a Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, addressed key constitutional questions and outlined significant conclusions.
- The Supreme Court validated the Union Government's decision to revoke the special status of J&K under Article 370, emphasizing that the state had no internal sovereignty.
- The Court refrained from adjudicating on the reorganization of J&K into a Union Territory but upheld the creation of Ladakh as a UT.

- The Court addressed the modification of Article 367 through Constitutional Order 272, stating that changes made were ultra vires Article 370.
- The judgment underscored that Jammu and Kashmir did not retain an element of sovereignty upon joining the Union of India.
- The Court affirmed that Article 370 was a temporary provision, and the power of the President under Article 370(3) to declare it inoperative persisted even after the dissolution of the J&K Constituent Assembly.
- The Court directed the Election Commission to conduct elections for the J&K Legislative Assembly by September 30, 2024, and emphasized the restoration of J&K's statehood as soon as possible.

Economy

GDP grows by 7.6% in Q2



DATE: 14th December, 2023

According to the latest data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 7.6% in second quarter (Q2) of 2023-24, covering the months of July to September.

Key Points:

- India's economy in Q2 witnessed a decline in agriculture, a surge in manufacturing, and a slowdown in services sectors.
- It appears that India's central bank accurately predicted the country's GDP growth rate for the fiscal year, despite initially seeming optimistic compared to other economists.
- These are the key sources of value addition, employment, and external demand, which can help India diversify its economy and integrate with the global market.

Education

Fourth Phase Roll-Out of GIAN Scheme



DATE: 14th December, 2023

After an eight-year journey, including a brief pause during COVID, the Ministry of Education is preparing to resume the fourth phase of the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN).

Key Points:

- The initiative aims to bring in distinguished scholars worldwide to teach at Indian universities.
- The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), after evaluating the scheme, recommended its continuation.
- GIAN is a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India designed to foster collaboration and enhance the quality of education and research in Indian academic institutions.
- Launched in 2015, the primary objective of the GIAN scheme is to provide an opportunity for students and faculty to interact with the best academic and industry experts from all over the world.

Economy

India's Manufacturing PMI Rises



DATE: 14th December, 2023

The manufacturing sector in India showed signs of recovery in November from October's eight-month low pace, with the S&P Global India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rising to 56 from 55.5. However, the growth of export orders was the slowest since June.

Key Points:

- PMI data are compiled by S&P Global for more than 40 economies worldwide.
- The PMI dataset features a headline number, which indicates the overall health of an economy, and sub-indices, which provide insights into other key economic drivers such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, exports, capacity utilization, employment and inventories.

International

Conferences & Summits

World Spice Congress



DATE: 21st September, 2023

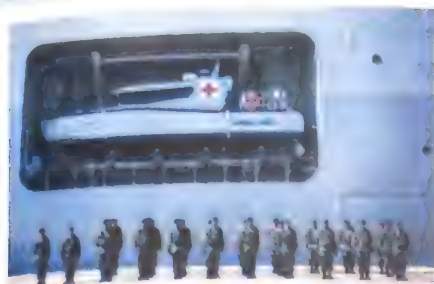
The 14th edition of the World Spice Congress (WSC) began in Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

Key Points:

- This three-day event is being carefully organized by Spices Board India, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with several trade bodies and export forums.
- India, often called the 'Spice Bowl' of the world, is known for the production of high quality, rare and medicinal spices.
- World Spice Congress (WSC) aims to create new opportunities for international trade of Indian spices.

Defence

ASEAN joint military exercises



DATE: 25th September, 2023

Units from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries recently began their inaugural joint military exercise in the Natuna Sea south of Indonesia.

Key Points:

- The five-day military operation taking place in the South Natuna Sea mainly focuses on enhancing military skills.
- These skills include areas such as maritime security, patrolling, and delivery of humanitarian aid and disaster relief.
- According to the Indonesian military, the exercise aims to promote regional stability and cooperation among **ASEAN members**.
- All ten ASEAN member states, including prospective member East Timor, are participating in these joint military exercises.

Economy

Singapore as World's freest economy



DATE: 26th September, 2023

Singapore overtakes Hong Kong as the world's freest economy.

Key Points:

- Singapore has overtaken Hong Kong to take the title of the world's freest economy, ending Hong Kong's 53-year reign at the top.
- This change is according to a report released by Canadian think tank Fraser Institute.

- The World Index of Economic Freedom, which has been tracking economic freedom since 1970, ranked Hong Kong in second place for the first time.

International Relations

I2U2 group announces joint space venture



DATE: 26th September, 2023

The I2U2 Group of India, Israel, United Arab Emirates and the US have announced a new joint space venture.

Key Points:

- It aims to develop a unique space based tool for policy makers, institutions and entrepreneurs.
- Also, the group of four countries launched its website to increase cooperation among the member countries and partnership around the world.
- Mainly aims to utilize space-based observational data and capabilities of the four I2U2 partner countries.

Defence

Israel unveils Merkava Mark 5



DATE: 26th September, 2023

Israel unveiled its state-of-the-art main battle tank, the Merkava Mark 5, known as the "Barak", marking a significant leap in technological advancement and military capability.

Key Points:

- The development of the Barak tank involved collaboration between the Israeli Defence Ministry's Armoured Vehicles Directorate, the IDF's Ground Forces, Armoured Corps, and several Israeli defense

companies, including Elbit Systems, Rafael, and Elta, a subsidiary of Israel Aerospace Industries.

- The technological advancements and combat capabilities of the Barak tank have wide-ranging implications for military innovation around the world.
- It reflects Israel's prowess in defense technology and may influence the development of future armored vehicles.

Conferences & Summits

Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit



DATE: 28th September, 2023

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi honoured the 20th anniversary of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, held at Science City in Ahmedabad by his presence.

Key Points:

- This prestigious event took place at Science City in Ahmedabad, a city that has witnessed the remarkable transformation of Vibrant Gujarat over the past two decades.
- The inception of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit occurred two decades ago, precisely on **September 28, 2003**, under the forward-thinking guidance of the former Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi.
- Vibrant Gujarat emerged as a means to uplift the state's spirits and engage with the world.

Economy

ADB lowers FY24 GDP forecast to 6.3%, India Ratings raises it to 6.2%



Asian Development Bank

DATE: 28th September, 2023

ADB has revised India's FY24 growth forecast downward to 6.3% due to erratic monsoons.

Key Points:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and India Ratings and Research have released contrasting forecasts for India's economic growth in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24).
- ADB cites erratic monsoon patterns as a primary reason for revising India's growth forecast down by 10 basis points to 6.3% for FY24.
- ADB also revised its inflation projection for India in FY24 to 5.5%, up from the previous 5%.
- Despite the downward adjustment for FY24, ADB maintains its growth projection for FY25 at 6.7%.

Economy

The Best Performing Currency



DATE: 28th September, 2023

The Afghani has emerged as the best-performing currency of the September quarter in 2023 attributed to a combination of factors including substantial humanitarian aid pouring into the country.

Key Points:

- This unexpected surge is attributed to a combination of factors, including massive dollar inflow in the form of humanitarian aid and currency control measures imposed by the ruling Taliban.
- The Afghani was trading at approximately 78.25 against the US dollar.
- In the wake of the regime change in August 2021, Afghanistan faced a dire humanitarian crisis, prompting international organizations to extend a helping hand.
- The **United Nations**, for instance, has provided a staggering **\$5.8 billion** in aid and development since the change in government, with \$4 billion of that sum transferred in 2022 alone.
- This influx of foreign currency has played a pivotal role in stabilizing the Afghan economy.

Defence

SAMPRITI- XI Exercise 2023



DATE: 3rd October 2023

The 11th edition of the annual joint military exercise, SAMPRITI, commenced on 3rd October 2023, in Umroi, Meghalaya. This exercise, organized alternately by India and Bangladesh, highlights the strong bilateral defence cooperation between the two countries.

Key Points:

- SAMPRITI-XI is a 14-day exercise that aims to enhance interoperability between the two armies, share tactical drills, and promote best practices.
- The exercise will include a Command Post Exercise (CPX) and a Field Training Exercise (FTX), focusing on Sub-Conventional Operations as per Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, it gives the UN Security Council the power to maintain peace.
- The CPX will emphasize decision-making after thorough deliberations.
- The FTX will validate grassroots-level operations through joint tactical drills for counter-terrorist operations, including hostage rescue, crowd control measures, and the use of helicopters.
- The two nations also conduct Naval Exercise Bongosagar.

5th Meeting of Moscow Format Consultation on Afghanistan



DATE: 4th October, 2023

The meeting, which took place on September 29, 2023, featured special representatives and senior officials from India, Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, among others.

Key Points:

- In a significant diplomatic gathering held in the Russian City of Kazan, representatives from various countries convened for the fifth meeting of the Moscow Format Consultation on Afghanistan.
- The acting minister for Foreign Affairs appointed by the Taliban in Afghanistan was also in attendance, alongside representatives from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey.
- The primary focus of this high-level meeting was to discuss the ongoing situation in Afghanistan.
- One of the key outcomes of the meeting was a collective call on the Taliban to establish a government system that is "truly inclusive" and represents the interests of all key ethno political groups within the country.

Healthcare

World Health Organization's Specs 2030



DATE: 6th October 2023

The World Health Organization (WHO) is set to launch the SPECS 2030. The initiative's goal is to assist member states in addressing the unmet need for spectacles while ensuring the delivery of quality eye care.

Key Points:

- It envisions a world in which everyone who needs a refractive error intervention has access to quality, affordable and people-centred refractive error services.
- It has the mission to support Member States with the achievement of the 74th World Health Assembly endorsed 2030 target on effective refractive error coverage.
- The initiative calls for coordinated global action amongst all stakeholders across 5 strategic pillars, in line with the letters of SPECS, to address the key challenges to improving refractive error coverage.
- Refractive error of vision is a common eye condition that affects the way light is focused on the retina (a light-sensitive layer of tissue in the back of your eye), leading to blurred or distorted vision.

Social

Largest Hindu Temple in New Jersey



DATE: 9th October, 2023

The largest Hindu temple created by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham was inaugurated on October 8, in Robbinsville, New Jersey.

Key Points:

- The architectural marvel is not only a testament to the vibrant Hindu community in the US but also a symbol of the enduring spirit of artistry, spirituality, and human dedication.
- The temple, set up in the picturesque city of Robbinsville, New Jersey, is a remarkable achievement.
- It stands as the largest Hindu temple outside India in the modern era.
- The temple's inauguration was guided by BAPS spiritual leader Mahant Swami Maharaj.
- The temple houses a remarkable collection of over 10,000 statues, complex carvings of Indian musical instruments, and various dance forms.

International Relations

Indian Ocean Rim Association



DATE: 11th October, 2023

Sri Lanka is set to take over the chairmanship of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) during the 23rd Council of Ministers' Meeting** scheduled for **11th October, 2023**, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Key Points:

- Sri Lanka will hold the chairmanship of the association from 2023 to 2025.
- The vision for IORA originated during a visit by the then President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela of South Africa to India in 1995, where he said: "the natural urge of the facts of history and geography should broaden itself to include the concept of an Indian Ocean rim for socio-economic co-operation."
- Bangladesh held the chairmanship from November 2021 - November 2023.
- IORA has **23 Member States** and 11 Dialogue Partners including Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Defence

20th round of military talks in Ladakh



DATE: 12th October, 2023

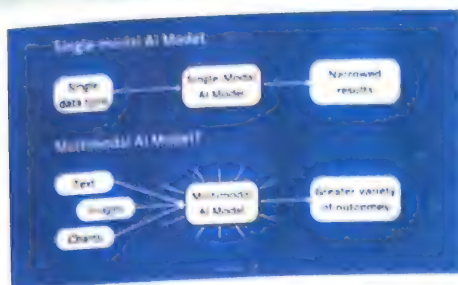
India and China held their 20th round of military discussions over a two-day period, with an emphasis on maintaining an 'open and constructive' atmosphere.

Key Points:

- Both countries engaged in a series of diplomatic discussions to address the persisting issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.
- The talks, held at the Corps Commander level, aimed to foster an open and constructive atmosphere, fostering an early and mutually acceptable resolution.
- The LAC, the de facto border between India and China, has been a source of tension for many years, and eastern Ladakh is no exception.

Information Technology

Emergence of Multimodal AIs



DATE: 14th October, 2023

There has been a paradigm shift within AI (Artificial Intelligence) towards Multimodal Systems, allowing users to engage with AI through a combination of text, images, sounds, and videos.

Key Points:

- Multimodal AI is artificial intelligence that combines multiple types, or modes, of data to create more accurate determinations, draw insightful conclusions or make more precise predictions about real-world problems.
- Multimodal AI systems train with and use video, audio, speech, images, text and a range of traditional numerical data sets.
- Multimodal audio systems follow similar principles, with Whisper, OpenAI's open-source speech-to-text translation model, serving as the foundation for GPT's voice processing capabilities.
- It is working on a project named "Gobi" which aims to create a multimodal AI system from scratch, distinct from the GPT models.

OpenAI announced enhancements to its GPT-3.5 and GPT-4 models, allowing them to analyze images and engage in speech synthesis, enabling more immersive interactions with users.

Education

Passport to Earning (P2E) Initiative

DATE: 16th October, 2023

UNICEF's global learning-to-earning solution, **Passport to Earning (P2E)**, has skilled and certified **more than one million young people in India** in areas of financial literacy and digital productivity.



Key Points:

- Aligned with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, the P2E program offers free access to certificate courses in digital productivity, financial literacy, employability skills, and other in-demand, job-ready skills.
- Notably, 62% of the beneficiaries of P2E courses in India are adolescent girls and young women.
- With the goal of providing long-term sustainable skills to 5 million youth in India aged 14-29 by 2024 and connecting them to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, P2E is a vital contribution to the nation's educational and economic landscape.

Science & Technology

INS Sagardhwani



DATE: 16th October, 2023

INS Sagardhwani, the oceanographic research vessel of the **Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL)**, **Kochi under the DRDO**, set sail on the **Sagar Maitri (SM) Mission-4** from South Jetty, Southern Naval Command (SNC), Kochi.

Key Points:

- INS Sagardhwani's mission includes scientific deployments in the Northern Arabian Sea and collaborative research programs with institutions like Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, fostering stronger working relationships between Indian and IOR ocean researchers.
- INS Sagardhwani is a marine acoustic research ship that is constructed indigenously and was launched in July 1994.

International Relations

UN Approved Multinational Security Mission in Haiti



DATE: 18th October, 2023

Recently, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has approved the Multinational Security Mission (MSS), led by Kenya, to restore security, protect critical infrastructure and control spiralling violence in Haiti.

Key Points:

- Haiti faced escalating gang violence, causing chaos and suffering throughout the country. A group of gangs known as “G9 and Family” disrupted the main fuel port and the Capital city Port-au-Prince, leading to a nationwide crisis.
- This has resulted in widespread killings of nearly 2,800 people, between October 2022 and June 2023.
- Human rights groups have reported a rise in sexual violence and crimes against women. In addition to this, mass looting and burning of houses have led to the displacement of thousands of people, with around 200,000 fleeing their homes. As per estimates, almost half the population is in need of humanitarian assistance.
- The Haitian Prime Minister reached out to the international community, seeking specialized armed forces to counter the gangs and their backers.

Science & Technology

Ghost Particle Detector “Trident”



DATE: 25th October, 2023

China is constructing world’s largest neutrino-detecting telescope named “Trident” in the western Pacific Ocean to detect elusive particles known as “ghost particles” or neutrinos.

Key Points:

- China is embarking on a groundbreaking endeavour by constructing an immense telescope in the western Pacific Ocean.
- The primary mission of this massive facility is to detect elusive particles known as “ghost particles” or neutrinos.
- This ambitious undertaking will result in the world’s largest neutrino-detecting telescope.
- Neutrinos are a type of electron but, like neutrons, they do not have any charge.
- They are among the most abundant particles in our universe.
- With trillions of neutrinos passing through at any given second, they are also among the tiniest.
- Neutrinos were long believed to be massless, until scientists found evidence that they do have a very small mass.

Defence

Exercise Harimau Shakti 2023



DATE: 25th October, 2023

Indian and Malaysian armies have initiated “Exercise Harimau Shakti 2023.”

Key Points:

- This joint bilateral training exercise, held at Umroi Cantonment in India, aims to strengthen military capabilities.
- “Exercise Harimau Shakti 2023” not only advances military capabilities but also symbolizes the enduring friendship between India and Malaysia, reinforcing their commitment to regional security and stability.
- The Malaysian Army’s participation in “Exercise Harimau Shakti 2023” is marked by troops from the 5th Royal Battalion of the Malaysian Army.
- Their inclusion underscores the commitment of Malaysia in fostering international military relations and promoting collaborative exercises.

Defence**Joint Naval Exercise in the Gulf of Guinea**

DATE: 25th October, 2023

India and EU ships conducted joint activities in the Gulf of Guinea, in an effort to reinforce naval maritime security cooperation in support of the region.

Key Points:

- The exercise followed the third meeting of the EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue on 5th Oct 23 in Brussels.
- During the exercise, Indian Navy’s INS Sumedha, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, was joined by three EU Member States’ ships in the Gulf of Guinea, Italian Navy Ship ITS Foscari, French Navy Ship FS Ventôse, and Spanish Navy Ship Tornado.
- The four ships practiced a series of tactical manoeuvres in international waters off the coast of Ghana, including a boarding exercise, a flying exercise using the helicopters embarked on French Ship Ventôse and Indian Naval Ship Sumedha, and transfer of personnel between ships.

Polity & Governance**Turkish Republic’s 100th Anniversary Celebration**

DATE: 30th October, 2023

- Turkey observed the 100th anniversary of its modern, secular republic’s creation, marking a significant historical milestone as a modern, secular state following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Key Points:

- The celebration was relatively subdued, featuring a firework and drone show in Istanbul and a procession of 100 naval ships. Notably, there was no grand gala reception.
- The subdued atmosphere was influenced by recent events, including a devastating earthquake that claimed 50,000 lives and the Israeli-Hamas conflict that created turmoil in the Middle East.

Defence**Exercise KAZIND 2023**

DATE: 30th October, 2023

Indian Army and Indian Air Force contingent comprising 120 personnel departed for Kazakhstan today to take part in the 7th edition of Joint Military ‘Exercise KAZIND-2023’.

Key Points:

- This collaborative endeavour will take place in Otar, Kazakhstan, spanning from 30th October to 11th November 2023.

- The Indian Army contingent, led by a Battalion from the DOGRA Regiment, consists of 90 personnel.
- The primary focus of 'Exercise KAZIND-2023' is to hone the skills and coordination needed for conducting Counter Terrorism operations within a sub-conventional environment under the United Nations mandate.
- Both contingents will work together to rehearse various tactical drills, encompassing Raid, Search and Destroy Operations, Small Team Insertion and Extraction Operations, and more.
- Additionally, the exercise scope extends to Counter Unmanned Aerial System Operations.

Economy

IMF Forecasts Global Growth Slowdown to 2.9% in 2024



DATE: 30th October, 2023

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently unveiled its latest economic projections, revealing that global growth is expected to remain at 3 percent in 2023 and further decline to 2.9 percent in 2024, marking one of the lowest growth rates in decades.

Key Points:

- In its "Navigating Global Divergences" report for October 2023, the IMF outlines the key factors contributing to this subdued outlook and highlights the significant challenges the global economy faces.
- The IMF's baseline forecast projects a slowdown in global growth from 3.5 percent in 2022 to 3 percent in 2023 and further to 2.9 percent in 2024.
- Advanced economies are also expected to experience a decline, with growth dropping from 2.6 percent in 2022 to 1.5 percent in 2023 and 1.4 percent in 2024.

- Emerging markets and developing economies are likely to witness a slight decrease in growth, moving from 4.1 percent in 2022 to 4 percent in both 2023 and 2024.
- The report suggests that global inflation is expected to gradually decrease, declining from 8.7 percent in 2022 to 6.9 percent in 2023 and 5.8 percent in 2024.

International Relations

Bangladesh Honouring Indian Heroes



DATE: 31st October, 2023

A memorial dedicated to the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 is nearly completion in Ashunganj, Bangladesh.

Key Points:

- The memorial, which is expected to be completed by December, will carry the names of around 1,600 Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.
- The foundation stone for this poignant memorial was laid by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in March 2021.
- He emphasized that the engraving of the names of Indian soldiers on the memorial would serve as an evident to the sacrifice of Indian soldiers and their legacy.
- During his visit to Bangladesh in March 2021, Prime Minister Modi saluted the bravery of the Indian soldiers who fought alongside their Bangladesh counterparts.
- He also announced India's intention to donate military equipment used by the Indian armed forces during the Liberation War for display in Bangladesh museums, further cementing the strong bond between the two nations.

Conferences & Summits

Goa Maritime Conclave 2023



DATE: 1st November, 2023

Recently, the 4th edition of Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) - 2023 has been held by the Indian Navy under the aegis of Naval War College, Goa.

Key Points:

- The conclave was attended by delegates from twelve **Indian Ocean nations**, including Comoros, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- Theme 2023: "Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region: Converting Common Maritime Priorities into Collaborative Mitigating Frameworks".
- The GMC is a high-level gathering of naval and defence officials from various **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** nations to discuss common maritime challenges and enhance regional cooperation.
- It is the Indian Navy's outreach Initiative providing a multinational platform to harness the collective wisdom of practitioners of maritime security and the academia towards garnering outcome oriented maritime thought.

It provides a forum for exchange of views by the Chiefs of Navy/ Heads of Maritime Agencies on dealing with contemporary and future maritime challenges, as well as presenting cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability amongst partner maritime agencies.

- **Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** was launched in 2015.
- It is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

International Relations

Visa-Free Entry to Thailand



DATE: 3rd November, 2023

Thailand is taking steps to revitalize its tourism industry by allowing visa free entries for the citizens of India and Taiwan, from 10th November 2023 to 10th May 2024.

Key Points:

- The decision aims to make it easier for travellers from these countries to explore the beauty of Thailand and contribute to the country's tourism sector.
- As per the announcement, travellers from India and Taiwan can enjoy a maximum stay of 30 days in Thailand without the need for a visa.
- China was Thailand's top pre-pandemic tourism market, contributing 11 million of the record 39 million arrivals in 2019.
- According to the latest government data, from January to October 29, 2023, Thailand welcomed 22 million visitors who contributed 927.5 billion baht (\$25.67 billion) to the economy.

Conferences & Summits

World Food India 2023

DATE: 3rd November, 2023

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the second edition of World Food India 2023, which is a platform for meaningful discussions and exploring investment opportunities in the agri-food sector.

**Key Points:**

- The second edition unites culture, cuisine, and commerce, providing a platform for discussions, partnerships and agri-food sector investments.
- The event was commenced in Bharat Mandapam at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will do the honours.
- A notable highlight of the inauguration will be the Prime Minister's commitment to supporting Self

Help Groups (SHGs) by disbursing seed capital assistance for over one lakh SHG members.

- World Food India 2023 aims to position India as the 'food basket of the world.'
- The event coincides with the celebration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets, further emphasizing the importance of diverse and sustainable food sources.
- World Food India 2023 will feature various pavilions designed to showcase the innovation and strength of the Indian food processing industry.
- The event will host a total of 48 sessions, each focusing on different aspects of the food processing industry.
- In the edition of World Food India, the Netherlands would serve as the partner country, symbolizing the event's international reach and collaborations.
- Japan would be the focus country, shedding light on its unique contributions and innovations in the global food sector.

Conferences & Summits

3rd International Convention on Sustainable Trade & Standards

DATE: 4th November, 2023

The **Quality Council of India (QCI)**, an autonomous organization of the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry hosted the 3rd International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (ICSTS) in New Delhi.



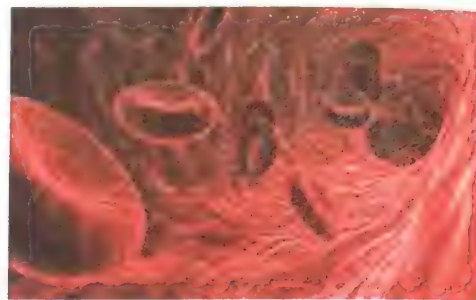
Key Points:

- QCI and the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) signed a bilateral agreement to strengthen trade relations and harmonize standards, promoting global trade landscape.
- India has forged partnerships with Brazil and Mexico and has now extended cooperation with the ARSO regarding Voluntary Sustainability Standards.
- The **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** initiative was highlighted as it is driving the digitalization initiative, revolutionizing e-commerce in India and making trade more accessible and efficient in the digital age.
- At ICSTS, India Good Agricultural Practices (IndG.A.P.) standards were compared to GLOBAL Good

Agricultural Practices (GLOBALG.A.P.) standards through the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) mechanism and creation of National Interpretation Guidelines (NIG) also took place at the ICSTS.

Healthcare

Haemoglobin in Chondrocytes



DATE: 4th November, 2023

A recent serendipitous discovery in a study published in Nature found that chondrocytes, which produce cartilage, also produce and rely on haemoglobin for their survival, revealing that haemoglobin isn't exclusive to **red blood cells (RBCs)**.

Key Points:

- Haemoglobin is essential for the survival of chondrocytes, the cells that form cartilage. Without haemoglobin, chondrocytes die and cause embryonic lethality in mice (as experiments were conducted on mice).
- Haemoglobin helps chondrocytes cope with low oxygen levels by transporting oxygen within the cells. Without haemoglobin, chondrocytes suffer from hypoxic stress and impaired function.
- The structures, referred to as 'haemoglobin bodies' or 'Hedy,' were found within chondrocytes in the cartilage, and they appeared to form via a process similar to phase separation, akin to oil separating from water.
- Haemoglobin helps chondrocytes cope with low oxygen levels by transporting oxygen within the cells. Without haemoglobin, chondrocytes suffer from hypoxic stress and impaired function.
- Haemoglobin acts as an oxygen reservoir for chondrocytes, releasing oxygen when needed. Without haemoglobin, chondrocytes cannot maintain adequate oxygen levels and die.

Conferences & Summits

Sixth Assembly of International Solar Alliance



DATE: 6th November, 2023

Recently, the Sixth Assembly of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** was convened at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- The Assembly discussed the ISA's broader strategy, emphasizing the need to focus on energy access before transitioning to renewable sources, echoing the organization's philosophy of "access first and then transition."

The assembly announced an increase in **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** for projects, raising it from 10% to a range of 10% to 35% to foster greater investments, particularly in African countries.

- Four projects supported by the ISA were inaugurated during the assembly. These initiatives spanned across different countries:

- Solarization of the Malawi Parliament
- Solarization of rural healthcare centers in Fiji
- Installation of a solar-powered cold storage in Seychelles
- Solarization of a school in Kiribati

India reaffirmed the commitment to make **solar energy** the primary energy source and emphasized that renewable energy could potentially supply 65% of the world's total electricity by 2030 and decarbonize 90% of the power sector by 2050.

Defence

S-400 Missile & Project Kusha



DATE: 7th November, 2023

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** to strengthen its defence capabilities has deployed three **S-400 Triumf air defence missile** squadrons along the borders with China and Pakistan.

Key Points:

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile (SAM) system developed by Russia, capable of intercepting and destroying various aerial targets, such as aircraft, drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles.
- India decided to procure the S-400 missiles to enhance its air defence capabilities and deterrence posture against China and Pakistan, which have been modernizing and expanding their air forces and missile arsenals.
- India's acquisition is crucial to counter the growing presence and influence of China in the **Indian Ocean Region**, where China has been building ports, bases, and infrastructure projects.
- Project Kusha led by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is an ambitious defence initiative by India aimed at developing its long-range air defence system by 2028-29.
- Project Kusha is expected to rival the effectiveness of the renowned S-400 system of Russia and the **Iron Dome system of Israel**.

International Relations

India, Bhutan enhance Bilateral Ties with Cross-Border Rail Link



DATE: 7th November, 2023

India and Bhutan are enhancing their bilateral relations with a proposed cross-border rail link and trade infrastructure upgrades.

Key Points:

- During a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, both countries discussed trade, technology, and cross-border connectivity.
- This comes at a time when China and Bhutan are in negotiations to resolve their border dispute.

- The two nations have agreed to conduct a “final location survey” for a proposed rail link between Kokrajhar in Assam, India, and Gelephu in Bhutan, which is set to be built with Indian support.
- Darranga in Assam and Samdrup Jongkhar in Bhutan will be designated as immigration check post locations to facilitate the entry and exit of third country nationals by land route, boosting connectivity and tourism.
- The Haldibari (West Bengal)-Chilahati (Bangladesh) rail link will serve as an additional route for Bhutan’s trade with Bangladesh, enhancing regional trade.
- India will provide bridge financing during the transition between Bhutan’s 12th and 13th five-year plans for projects supported by India.
- India will consider concessional financing for Bhutan’s Gyalsung Project, a skill development and capacity-building program.
- Bhutan’s King will visit Mumbai to engage with business leaders and seek investments for the proposed special economic zone (SEZ) at Gelephu.

Environment

Global Declaration for River Dolphins



DATE: 7th November, 2023

Recently, 11 Asian and South American countries signed a landmark deal in Bogota, Colombia to save the world’s six surviving species of **river dolphins** from extinction.

Key Points:

- The Global Declaration for River Dolphins aims to halt the decline of all river **dolphin species** and bolster the most vulnerable populations through concerted efforts.
- Countries that adopted the declaration include: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, and Venezuela.

- The eight foundational pillars of the Global Declaration for River Dolphins comprise initiatives like establishing a network of protected areas, improving river dolphin site management, expanding research and monitoring efforts, engaging local communities and Indigenous Peoples, eradicating unsustainable fishing practices, enhancing water quality and quantity, promoting World River Dolphin Day (24th October) to raise awareness, and augment resource allocation and partnerships.
- Also, the recent tragic deaths of over 150 river dolphins in the drought-stricken Lake Tefe in the Amazon illustrate how climate change poses an increasingly severe threat to their survival.

Cinema

54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI)



DATE: 8th November, 2023

The 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) is set to unfold in Goa from November 20 to 28, 2023.

Key Points:

- Union Minister Shri Anurag Thakur announced the event, highlighting India’s growing influence in the global media and entertainment industry.
- This cinematic extravaganza, under the aegis of the Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, promises to be a star-studded celebration of world cinema.
- A prestigious feature of IFFI is the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award (SRLTA), presented to honour Excellence in World Cinema.
- The legendary Hollywood actor and producer, Michael Douglas, will grace the event to accept this coveted award.
- The ‘International Section’ of IFFI will showcase 198 films, including 13 World Premiers, 18 International Premiers, 62 Asia Premiers, and 89 India Premiers.

Art & Culture

Kozhikode & Gwalior Join UNESCO Creative Cities Network



DATE: 8th November, 2023

UNESCO recently welcomed 55 new cities into its Creative Cities Network (UCCN). Among these, two Indian cities, Kozhikode and Gwalior, have garnered recognition for their cultural contributions.

Key Points:

- Kozhikode has a longstanding tradition of hosting literary events, including the Kerala Literature Festival, one of the largest literary gatherings in Asia, which showcases Kozhikode as a vital center for intellectual exchange and literary discussions.
- Kozhikode's literary commitment is evident through its 500-plus libraries, highlighting its dedication to knowledge dissemination and fostering a culture of reading.
- The city is also a nurturing ground for renowned writers like S. K. Pottekkatt, Thikkodiyann and P. Valsala Sanjayan, along with a vibrant community of poets, scholars, and publishers contributing to the richness of Malayalam literature and culture.
- Gwalior, located in Madhya Pradesh, has earned the distinction of being designated as the 'City of Music' by UNESCO, following in the footsteps of Varanasi, which received this recognition in 2015.

International Relations

6th Session of India-Ethiopia Joint Trade Committee



DATE: 9th November, 2023

The 6th Session of the India-Ethiopia Joint Trade Committee (JTC) recently concluded in Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia**, bringing together officials from both countries to strengthen economic ties.

Key Points:

- India invited Ethiopia to collaborate on integrating the **Unified Payment Interface (UPI)** with Ethiopia's Ethswitch.
- India urged Ethiopia to explore settling **trade transactions in the local currency** for enhanced bilateral trade and conservation of foreign exchange.
- Health and pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles, infrastructure projects, food, and agro-processing are identified as key sectors for mutual investments.
- Both sides also reviewed the progress of ongoing discussions for Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in the field of Standardization and quality assurance and Customs procedure and agreed to conclude them expeditiously.
- India is one of the largest sources of long-term concessional credit to Ethiopia, with over USD 1 billion for sectors such as rural electrification, sugar industry and railways.
- Bilateral trade between India and Ethiopia reached USD 642.59 million in 2022-23.
- India is the second-largest exporter to Ethiopia.

Defense

CORPAT & EX-BONGOSAGAR



DATE: 11th November, 2023

The 4th edition of the Bilateral Exercise between the Indian Navy and the Bangladesh Navy, **BONGOSAGAR-23**, and the 5th edition of Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) by the two navies were conducted in the Northern Bay of Bengal recently.

Key Points:

- Ships and aircraft from both navies undertook joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and subsequently conducted maritime exercises to enhance interoperability.

- CORPAT-23 (India -Bangladesh) also included the maiden Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) drills conducted between the two navies, wherein a Search and Rescue scenario at sea was exercised.

Conferences & Summits

INDUS-X Investors Meet



DATE: 12th November, 2023

The **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** and the **US Department of Defence** organized the **inaugural INDUS-X Investors Meet** in New Delhi, fostering collaboration in defence innovation.

Key Points:

- The event featured the launch of the **INDUS-X Educational Series (Gurukul)** aimed at guiding innovators and startups in the **defence ecosystem of India and the US**.
- Panel discussions focused on investment opportunities in the defence sector, establishing a sustainable commercial foundation for collaboration and co-production.
- The India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) initiative, launched in June 2023, aims to enhance strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between India and the US.

Environment

Zaglossus attenboroughi

DATE: 14th November, 2023

Recently, Scientists have rediscovered the elusive **Zaglossus attenboroughi**, a long-beaked echidna named after **naturalist David Attenborough**, in Indonesia's Papua region.



Key Points:

- Echidnas, part of the monotreme group, are unique mammals laying eggs instead of giving live birth.
- Also known as spiny anteaters, they sport sharp spines on their bodies and primarily feed on ants and termites.
- Echidnas, particularly the *Zaglossus attenboroughi*, are nocturnal and shy, making their discovery challenging.
- This species was confined to the remote Cyclops Mountains.
- **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List:** Critically Endangered
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** Appendix II

Defence

Bulava Ballistic Missile



DATE: 14th November, 2023

Russia's new nuclear-powered submarine **Imperator Alexander III** carried out a successful test launch of the **Bulava** ballistic missile, designed to carry nuclear warheads.

Key Points:

- Development of this missile commenced in 1998.
- The first powered flight test of the Bulava missile occurred in September 2005.
- Its first submerged test launch followed in December.
- It was designed to be deployed onto Russia's Borey-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).
- It was designed to be the backbone of Moscow's nuclear triad and has a range of over 8,000 kilometres (close to 5,000 miles).
- It is 12-13.5 m in length and has a diameter of approximately 2.0 m.
- Launch Weight: 36,800 kg
- It is a three-stage solid-fuel missile.

- It is designed to carry multiple warheads.
- Each warhead will strike a different target.
- It can carry six Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs).
- These MIRVs are capable of manoeuvring in-flight and re-targeting, in order to outmanoeuvre hostile air defences.
- It is stated that this missile has an accuracy of 350 m.

Economy

Morgan Stanley Forecasts Robust 6.5% Growth for India's Economy



DATE: 14th November, 2023

Morgan Stanley Research predicts a strong economic performance for India, projecting a GDP growth of around 6.5% in both FY24 and FY25.

Key Points:

- In its recently released “**2024 India Economics Outlook**,” Morgan Stanley Research predicts that India’s economy will experience substantial growth, hovering around 6.5% for both FY2024 and FY2025.
- The investment bank attributes this positive outlook to the country’s resilient domestic fundamentals, strong corporate and financial sector balance sheets, and the impact of recent policy reforms.
- The research emphasizes that domestic demand, supported by robust factors, will play a crucial role in sustaining India’s growth trajectory.
- Geopolitical tensions in Israel raise concerns about potential impacts on oil prices.
- The report suggests that the RBI is likely to maintain interest rates until the first half of 2024.

Trade & Commerce

42nd India International Trade Fair 2023



DATE: 14th November, 2023

The 42nd edition of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2023 kicks off at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- The esteemed event will be inaugurated by **Anupriya Patel**, the Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry.
- Running until the 27th of this month, the fourteen-day fair centers around the theme of “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**.”
- With over three thousand exhibitors, the fair boasts a diverse representation from both India and abroad. Representatives from **13 countries**, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Oman, Egypt, Nepal, Thailand, Turkiye, Vietnam, Tunisia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Iran, and UAE, are actively participating in the event from overseas.
- Bihar and Kerala take the spotlight as Partner States, while Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh are recognized as Focus States, contributing to the diverse array of exhibitors and offerings.

Energy

6th India-OPEC Energy Dialogue



DATE: 14th November, 2023

The 6th High-Level Meeting of the India-OPEC Energy Dialogue took place at the OPEC Secretariat in Vienna, Austria, underscoring a mutual commitment to global energy stability and prosperity.

Key Points:

- The co-chairs of the meeting were **HE Haitham Al Ghais**, Secretary General of OPEC, and **HE Hardeep Singh Puri**, Honourable Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs of the Republic of India.
- The open and candid discussions during the meeting were centered around crucial issues related to oil and energy markets.
- The emphasis was particularly on ensuring availability, affordability, and sustainability to guarantee the stability of energy markets globally.
- Recognizing the pivotal role of India in global economic growth and energy demand, the parties acknowledged the World Oil Outlook 2023.

Environment

Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040



DATE: 16th November, 2023

Recently, **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** has released the interim report titled-Towards Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040.

Key Points:

- In 2022, 21 million tonnes (MT) of plastics leaked into the environment globally.
- Stabilizing primary plastic use at 2020 levels by 2040 would still result in significant plastic leakage (12 MT) by 2040.
- Plastics generate a variety of life cycle impacts, including contributing 3.8% of total global greenhouse gas emissions (1.9 GtCO₂ e in 2022).
- These ambitious global actions to tackle plastic pollution by 2040 would incur costs amounting to 0.5% of global GDP in 2040.

- Fast-growing countries with less advanced waste management systems will require significant investments (over USD 1 trillion between 2020 and 2040) for waste collection, sorting, and treatment.

Energy

6th India-OPEC Energy Dialogue



DATE: 16th November, 2023

The 6th High-Level Meeting of the India-**Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** Energy Dialogue brought together key representatives at the OPEC Secretariat in Vienna, Austria.

Key Points:

- The Meeting focused on key issues related to oil and energy markets with a specific emphasis on ensuring availability, affordability and sustainability, which are necessary to ensure the stability of energy markets.
- The meeting concluded with both parties underscoring the importance of fostering enhanced cooperation between OPEC and India moving forward.
- World Oil Outlook 2023, which forecasted that India would be the fastest-growing major developing economy, averaging long-term growth of 6.1% between 2022-2045 and accounting for over 28% of incremental global energy demand during the same period.
- The meeting also acknowledged the achievements and initiatives of India in the fields of **renewable energy**, energy efficiency, **hydrogen economy**, and **climate change mitigation**.
- It was agreed to hold the next High-Level Meeting of the India-OPEC Energy Dialogue in 2024 in India.
- OPEC Members are Algeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

Defence

MITRA SHAKTI 2023



DATE: 16th November, 2023

Exercise MITRA SHAKTI-2023, being held in Aundh (Pune) in November 2023, marks the joint effort between Indian and Sri Lankan contingents comprising troops mainly from the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment and the 53 Infantry Division, respectively.

Key Points:

- This exercise focuses on rehearsing sub-conventional operations under the UN Charter's Chapter VII, emphasizing counter-terrorism tactics like raids, heliborne missions, and search-and-destroy operations.
- Exercise will also involve the employment of Drones and Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems.
- Its objectives are to improve interoperability, reduce risks during **peacekeeping** operations, and exchange combat skill insights for mutual learning.

Cinema

Jimmy Kimmel will host 96th Academy Awards



DATE: 17th November, 2023

The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences has announced that Jimmy Kimmel will return as the host for the 96th Academy Awards in 2024.

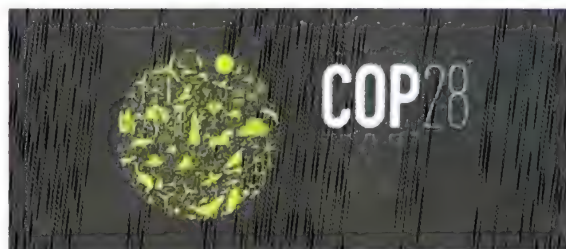
Key Points:

- The decision comes after Kimmel's successful stint in 2023, where the ceremony garnered 18.7 million viewers, the highest since the pre-pandemic broadcast in 2020.

- Jimmy Kimmel, known for his wit and humor, previously hosted the Oscars in 2017 and 2018.
- With the upcoming 96th Academy Awards, Kimmel is inching up in the record books, expressing his dream of hosting the Oscars exactly four times.

Conferences & Summits

COP 28



DATE: 1st December, 2023

Recently, the **United Arab Emirates** announced an **offer to host** the **28th session of Conference of Parties (COP 28)** to the **UNFCCC** in **Abu Dhabi in 2023**.

Key Points:

- COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber spoke during the opening session at the COP28 U.N. Climate Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- COP28 is the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference, being held from 30 November until 12 December 2023 at Expo City, Dubai.
- The conference has been held annually since the first UN climate agreement in 1992.
- The COP conferences are intended for governments to agree on policies to limit global temperature rises and adapt to impacts associated with climate change.
- The main objective of Cop every year is to review and assess the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) terms, the Paris Agreement, and the Kyoto Protocol.
- At Cop28, member states negotiate while also facing their first Global Stocktake (GST).
- This refers to a scorecard that analyses countries' progress towards the Paris Agreement, with the goal of sparking actionable objectives for climate action plans due in 2025.
- On the opening day of the COP28 climate conference in Dubai, a loss and damage fund to help vulnerable countries cope with the impact of climate change has been officially launched.

- The initial funding is estimated to be \$475 million — host UAE pledged \$100 million, the European Union promised \$275 million, \$17.5 million from the US, and \$10 million from Japan.

Art & Culture

8th Wonder of the World



DATE: 2nd December, 2023

Angkor Wat, located in the heart of Cambodia, has recently earned the prestigious title of the 8th wonder of the world, surpassing Italy's Pompeii.

Key Points:

- This UNESCO World Heritage Site is not only the largest religious structure in the world but also a testament to architectural brilliance and cultural significance.
- Angkor Wat is an expansive temple complex that spans approximately **500 acres and serves as the largest religious monument in the world.**
- Originally constructed in the **12th century by King Suryavarman II**, the temple was dedicated to the Hindu deity Vishnu.

Art & Culture

Intangible Cultural Heritage



DATE: 3rd December, 2023

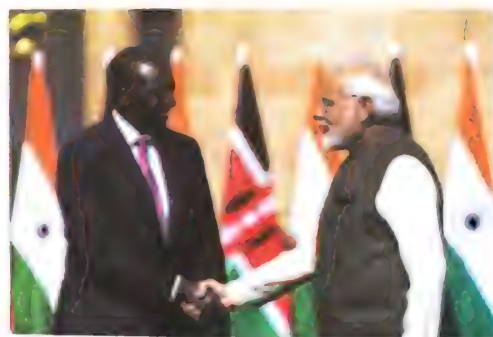
'Garba of Gujarat' has been inscribed in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by UNESCO.

Key Points:

- Garba of Gujarat is the 15th ICH element from India to join this list.
- This inscription underscores Garba's pivotal role as a unifying force that fosters social and gender inclusivity.
- Garba as a dance form is entrenched deeply in ritualistic and devotional roots, involving people from all walks of life and it continues to thrive as a vibrant living tradition bringing communities together.
- Under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 5th -9th December, 2023 in Kasane, Botswana.
- The inscription further highlights the commitment and efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India towards the safeguarding, promotion and preservation of our intangible cultural heritage.

International Relations

President of the Republic of Kenya visits India



DATE: 6th December, 2023

At the invitation of the President, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto will pay a State visit to India from 4-6 December, 2023.

Key Points:

- He would be accompanied by a high-level official delegation.
- It is President William Ruto's first visit to India in his present capacity. During his stay in New Delhi, President Ruto will meet with the President.
- He would be accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan on December 5, 2023.

- President Ruto held detailed discussions with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- A state banquet was hosted by the president in honor of President Ruto.
- President Ruto will also participate in a business and investment event in New Delhi.
- India has extended a \$250 million Line of Credit to Kenya for the modernization of its agricultural sector.

Education

Oxford Word of the Year 2023



DATE: 6th December, 2023

After over 30,000 language lovers around the world got involved to help refine Oxford's shortlist of eight words, they announced that the Oxford Word of the Year 2023 is **rizz**.

Key Points:

- This year, Oxford created a shortlist of eight words, all chosen to reflect the mood, ethos, or preoccupations of the past year, and put them to the public to vote for their favourites.
- 'rizz' is a colloquial noun, defined as 'style, charm, or attractiveness; the ability to attract a romantic or sexual partner'.
- Etymologically, the term is believed to be a shortened form of the word 'charisma', taken from the middle part of the word, which is an unusual word formation pattern.
- Our language experts chose rizz as an interesting example of how language can be formed, shaped, and shared within communities, before being picked up more widely in society.
- Other examples of this word formation pattern include 'fridge' (from 'refrigerator') and 'flu' (from 'influenza'). 'rizz' can also be used as a verb, in phrases such as 'to rizz up', which means 'to attract, seduce, or chat up (a person)'.

Conferences & Summits

India's Elevated Role in Codex Alimentarius Commission



DATE: 8th December, 2023

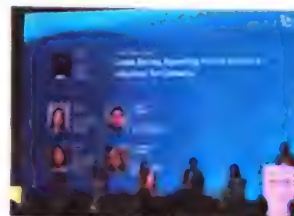
India has been unanimously elected as a member representing Asian region in the Executive Committee of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) during its 46th meeting being held at FAO Headquarters at Rome.

Key Points:

- Executive Committee is an important arm of the CAC and the member countries have a considerable interest in getting its membership.
- In this capacity, India would not only get an opportunity to contribute substantially in the International standard setting process for different food product categories but will also be involved in the decision making process.
- The Executive Committee supports in the management of the Commission's programme of standards development by conducting a "critical review" of proposals to undertake work and monitors the progress of standards development.
- The Executive Committee comprises of the Chair, three vice Chairs, six regional coordinators and seven elected representatives from the various geographical regions of Codex.
- India had proposed for setting up the global standards for millets under the Additional Agendas category on the first day of the CAC meeting on 27th November 2023 and the matter was deliberated at length on 30th November and was approved by the Commission for preparation of three Project document.

Environment

'Green Rising' Initiative



DATE: 9th December, 2023

'Green Rising' Initiative launched to empower youth in meaningful eco initiatives.

Key Points:

- On December 8th, at COP28, UNICEF's Generation Unlimited, in collaboration with India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, unveiled the "Green Rising" initiative.
- The "Green Rising" initiative is a collaborative effort between UNICEF's Generation Unlimited and India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, aimed at engaging youth in impactful environmental actions at the grassroots level.
- The Green Skills Development Programme aims to cultivate a proficient workforce within the environment and forest sectors, contributing to sustainability and green job creation.
- The Green Rising Global Initiative, led by UNICEF and Generation Unlimited, aspires to create pathways for at least 10 million children and youth in developing countries.

Space

MisrSat-2 Satellite



DATE: 13th December, 2023

China, Egypt jointly launched Satellite MisrSat-2.

Key Points:

- China and Egypt collaborated to develop and jointly assemble the MisrSat-2 Satellite, launching it from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China with the Long March-2C carrier rocket.
- Developed and assembled jointly by the two nations, this marks a pivotal moment in their burgeoning space partnership.
- The satellite, assembled in Egypt with Chinese support, was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, utilizing the Long March-2C carrier rocket.
- The MisrSat-2 project, valued at \$72 million, originated from a 2019 agreement between the

Egyptian Space Agency (EgSA) and the China National Space Administration.

- This groundbreaking collaboration involved the combined expertise of Chinese and Egyptian scientists and engineers in the design, assembly, and testing phases.
- Notably, this initiative positioned Egypt as the first African country with satellite assembly and testing capabilities.
- The launch of MisrSat-2 signifies the deepening ties between Egypt and China, especially in technology and space fields.
- The collaboration also reflects a broader trend of expanding trade and investment relations.

International Relations

India Re-elected to International Maritime Organisation Council



DATE: 14th December, 2023

Recently, India has been re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council, marking its continuous service at IMO.

Key Points:

- The re-election, part of the 2024–25 biennium, places India among the Category of 10 states with "the largest interest in international seaborne trade," reaffirming its pivotal role in global maritime affairs.
- The IMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that is responsible for regulating shipping and preventing marine pollution from ships.
- IMO was established in 1948 following a UN conference in Geneva and came into existence in 1958.
- IMO has 175 Member States and three Associate Members, and its headquarters are in London, United Kingdom.

Environment

World Bank's Plan to Combat Methane Emissions



DATE: 14th December, 2023

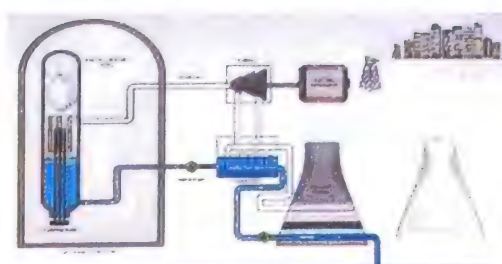
In an initiative to combat the rising threat of **methane emissions**, the **World Bank** has announced plans to launch a series of country-led programs, to reduce up to 10 million tons of methane over the course of their investment life spans.

Key Points:

- According to the World Bank, the move is a step in addressing the alarming increase in global temperatures and supporting communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
 - The ambitious programs will focus on slashing methane emissions from various sources, including rice production, livestock operations, and waste management.
 - The institution is set to collaborate with Germany, Norway, the United States, the UAE, and the private sector to implement effective solutions and reduce methane emissions across the entire energy value chain.
- GWP is a measure of how much heat a greenhouse gas traps in the atmosphere over a specific time period, usually 100 years, compared to carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Energy

World's First 4th-Generation Nuclear Reactor



DATE: 14th December, 2023

China unveils world's first 4th-generation Nuclear Reactor.

Key Points:

- The Shidao Bay nuclear power plant in eastern Shandong province, China, has begun commercial operations, marking the onset of the era of next-generation gas-cooled nuclear reactors.
- Recently, the Shidao Bay nuclear power plant in eastern Shandong province commenced commercial operations, heralding the era of next-generation gas-cooled nuclear reactors.
- The development is crucial for China's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and securing a sustainable energy future.
- A noteworthy aspect of the Shidao Bay project is its emphasis on domestically developed technology.
- The journey of the Shidao Bay plant began in 2012 with the initiation of construction. After years of meticulous planning and execution, the first Small Modular Reactor was successfully connected to the power grid in 2021.



GPAI ADOPTS NEW DELHI DECLARATION

The Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), consisting of 29 member nations, has unanimously embraced the New Delhi declaration.

This declaration emphasizes the necessity of addressing risks associated with the development and deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) systems while promoting fair access to crucial resources for AI innovation.

In contrast to the agreement signed at the United Kingdom AI Safety Summit, where countries committed to addressing risks from AI systems, the New Delhi declaration aims to strike a balance between innovation and associated risks.

While acknowledging the economic benefits of AI, the declaration highlights concerns related to fairness, privacy, and intellectual property rights.

Issues

National

Polity & Governance

Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal Dispute



DATE: 14th October, 2023

Recently, the Supreme Court has ordered the Punjab Government to complete Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal, warning the Government to comply with its orders.

Key Points:

- The court directed the Union Government to oversee talks between Punjab and the Haryana governments on this topic; the Haryana government has completed construction of its half of the canal.
- The Issue stems from a controversial 1981 water-sharing agreement drawn up when Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966.
- The canal, once completed, will enable sharing of the waters of the rivers Ravi and Beas between Haryana and Punjab.
- The Satluj Yamuna Link Canal is a proposed 214-kilometre-long canal connecting Sutlej and Yamuna rivers.
- Water resources are under the State List, while the Parliament has the power to make laws regarding inter-state rivers under the Union List.

Social

SC denies permission to terminate a 26-week pregnancy

DATE: 17th October, 2023

The Supreme Court of India recently denied permission to terminate a 26-week pregnancy for a married woman under the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.



Key Points:

- The case involved a 27-year-old married woman who was in her 26th week of pregnancy, seeking legal permission to terminate her pregnancy.
- The woman asserted her physical, emotional, mental, financial, and medical inability to carry, deliver, or raise another child, citing her pre-existing conditions and experiences with postpartum depression.
- The woman sought recourse to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 to plead her case.
- The Court expressed **reluctance to order a medical termination when the pregnancy is viable** and does not pose an **immediate threat to the woman's life**.
- The decision is grounded in the interpretation of **Section 5 of the MTP Act, 1971**, which allows abortion only if the woman's life and health are in immediate danger.

- The three-judge Bench, led by the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**, emphasized that a **woman cannot claim an “absolute, overriding right” to abort**, particularly when medical reports confirm that the **pregnancy doesn’t pose immediate danger to her life or that of the fetus**.
- CJI distinguished the term ‘life’ in Section 5 of MTP Act, 1971 from its **broader usage in Article 21 of the Constitution**, emphasizing its application to life-and-death situations.
- The government argues that the woman’s reproductive autonomy cannot infringe upon the rights of her unborn child.
- Refers to the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act of 2021**, which extended the abortion deadline to 24 weeks in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities.
- The case raises fundamental questions about **women’s reproductive rights**, even in **late stages of pregnancy**, and the ethical considerations surrounding abortion.

Social

Same Sex Marriages in India



DATE: 18th October, 2023

Recently, The **Supreme Court** has delivered its long awaited verdict **rejecting petitions to legalise same-sex marriage** and delved deeper on the provisions of **the Special Marriage Act, 1954** to examine the issue thoroughly, which have convergence and interrelationship with homosexuality.

Key Points:

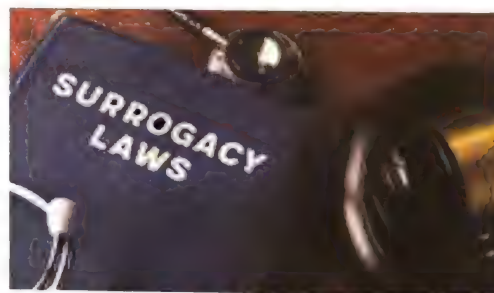
- A five-judge Constitution Bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of India ruled in a 3:2 verdict against giving constitutional validity to same-sex marriages.
- The CJI, in his opinion, concludes that the court can neither strike down or read words into the Special

Marriage Act (SMA) 1954 to include same sex members within the ambit of the SMA 1954.

- The top court said it is for Parliament and state Legislature to formulate laws on it.
- All five judges on the Bench agreed that there is no fundamental right to marry under the Constitution.
- The right to marry is not expressly recognized either as a fundamental or constitutional right under the Indian Constitution but a statutory right.
- Though marriage is regulated through various statutory enactments, its recognition as a fundamental right has only developed through judicial decisions of India’s Supreme Court. Such declaration of law is binding on all courts throughout India under Article 141 of the Constitution.
- The SC held that members of the LGBTQ community “are entitled, as all other citizens, to the full range of constitutional rights including the liberties protected by the Constitution” and are entitled to equal citizenship and “equal protection of law”.
- The legalisation of same-sex marriage requires a **concerted effort from all stakeholders, including the LGBTQIA+ community**, the government, civil society, and religious leaders.

Social

Right to avail surrogacy to Indian widows or female divorcees



DATE: 2nd November, 2023

Recently, the Delhi High Court has questioned the **association of marital status** with eligibility for surrogacy under the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021**.

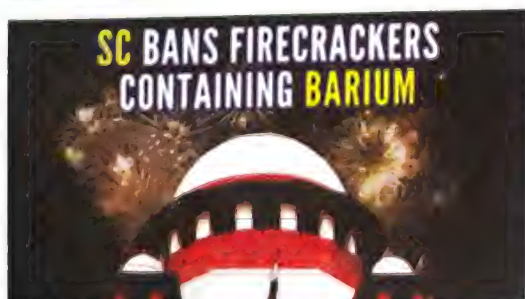
Key Points:

- The petitioner challenged Section 2(1)(s) of the Surrogacy Act, which limits the right to avail surrogacy to Indian widows or female divorcees between the ages of 35 and 45.

- The petitioner's plea also challenges the regulation that compels a single woman (widow or divorcee) to utilize her own eggs for surrogacy.
- Due to her age, using her own gametes is medically inadvisable, and she seeks a donor for female gametes.
- Surrogacy is an arrangement in which a woman (the surrogate) agrees to carry and give birth to a child on behalf of another person or couple (the intended parent/s).
- According to the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, it involves no monetary compensation to the surrogate mother other than the medical expenses and insurance coverage during the pregnancy.
- Under the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021**, a woman who is a widow or a divorcee between the age of 35 to 45 years or a couple, **defined as a legally married woman** and man, can avail of surrogacy if they have a medical condition necessitating this option.
- The banning of commercial surrogacy moves from the rights-based approach to **a needs-based approach, thus removing the women's autonomy to make their own reproductive decisions** and right to parenthood.
- One could argue that the state must stop the exploitation of poor women under surrogacy and protect the child's right to be born.
- The Act reinforces **traditional patriarchal norms** of our society that attributes no economic value to women's work and, directly **affecting the fundamental rights of the women** to reproduce under **Article 21 of the constitution**.

Social

Ban on Use of Barium & Other Prohibited Chemicals in Firecrackers



DATE: 10th November, 2023

The Supreme Court emphasized a nationwide ban on barium and other prohibited chemicals in firecrackers, highlighting its commitment to public health and the environment.

Key Points:

- The use of barium salts in fireworks was banned, and it was mandated that the noise levels of the crackers should adhere to permissible limits.
- In a decision this September, the Supreme Court rejected a plea by the firecracker manufacturers' association to permit the use of joined crackers and to incorporate barium with improved additives in green crackers.
- In October 2018, the Supreme Court took a significant step by imposing a ban on the production and sale of all crackers except 'green crackers' and those designed to emit reduced emissions, commonly referred to as improved crackers.
- The Supreme Court's unwavering stance on banning harmful chemicals in firecrackers reflects its commitment to environmental conservation and public health, promoting the adoption of eco-friendly alternatives for a safer and cleaner festive season.

Science & Technology

Deepfakes



DATE: 10th November, 2023

A Deepfake video showing an Indian actress has sparked outrage and concern over the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) to create realistic but fake videos, also known as deepfakes.

Key Points:

- Deepfakes are synthetic media that use AI to manipulate or generate visual and audio content, usually with the intention of deceiving or misleading someone.
- Deepfakes are created using a technique called generative adversarial networks (GANs), which

involve two competing neural networks: a generator and a discriminator.

- The generator tries to create fake images or videos that look realistic, while the discriminator tries to distinguish between the real and the fake ones.
- Deepfakes require a large amount of data, such as photos or videos, of the source and the target person, which are often collected from the internet or social media without their consent or knowledge.
- Deepfakes are a part of Deep Synthesis, which uses technologies, including deep learning and augmented reality, to generate text, images, audio and video to create virtual scenes.
- Deepfakes are a problem because they can be used for various malicious purposes, such as Spreading propaganda and fake news; Influencing elections and public opinion; Blackmailing and extortion individuals or organizations.
- Deepfake technology can violate the privacy, dignity, and reputation of individuals, and harm the mental health and well-being of the victims, especially women, who are often the targets of such malicious manipulation.

Agriculture

India's Falling Farm Exports



DATE: 11th November, 2023

According to recent Department of Commerce data, exports of farm commodities, at USD 23.6 billion in April-September 2023, were below the USD 26.7 billion for April-September 2022.

Key Points:

- There has been a drop in imports as well, from USD 19.3 billion to USD 16.2 billion resulting in a marginal dip in the agricultural trade surplus.
- In the April-September 2023 period, India's agricultural exports declined by 11.6% compared

to the previous year. This drop can be attributed to the government's implementation of bans and restrictions on the export of several commodities, including wheat, rice, and sugar.

- In September 2022, exports of broken rice were prohibited and a 20% duty levied on all white (non-parboiled) non-basmati grain shipments. In July 2023, exports of white non-basmati rice were banned altogether. Henceforth, only exports of parboiled non-basmati and basmati rice were allowed.
- The latest supply and demand brief from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) projects global ending cereal stocks for 2023-24.

INDIA'S TOP AGRI EXPORT ITEMS (\$ million)

	2021-22	2022-23	Apr-Sep 22	Apr-Sep 23
Marine products	7772.36	8077.98	4119.63	3803.88
Non-basmati rice	6133.63	6356.71	3199.18	2706.58
Sugar	4602.65	5770.83	2636.25	1302.06
Basmati rice	3537.49	4787.65	2278.35	2589.98
Spices	3896.03	3785.36	1926.90	1949.78
Buffalo meat	3303.78	3193.69	1636.10	1734.40
Raw cotton	2816.24	781.43	435.87	393.82
TOTAL*	50240.21	53153.55	26736.48	23621.71

Disaster Management

Uttarkashi Tunnel Collapse



DATE: 27th November 2023

Recently, an under-construction Silkyara-Barkot tunnel along the Yamunotri National Highway in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand, collapsed trapping a significant number of workers inside.

Key Points:

- On 12 November, 41 labourers got trapped as portions of the Silkyara-Dandalgaon tunnel collapsed following a landslide.
- It has been 14 days since the Uttarkashi tunnel collapsed and the stranded workers continue to remain trapped.
- The Silkyara-Barkot tunnel is part of the ambitious Char Dham all-weather road project of the Central Government.

- The exact cause of the tunnel collapse is yet to be ascertained.
- Continuous monitoring using stress and deformation meters, along with various support mechanisms like rock bolts, steel ribs, and specialized tunnel pipe umbrellas.
- Vertical drilling into the Silkyara tunnel is advancing at full speed, with around 20 metres already drilled.
- The machine needs to dig up around 86 metres to build a safe passage for the trapped workers.
- Normal life was also affected in Jharkhand due to the intermittent rains.
- To manage the situation and provide early relief to citizens the central government released funds to the State Disaster Relief Funds (SDRF) of both Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Disaster Management

Pilatus PC-7 Mk II Crash



DATE: 14th December, 2023

Two Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots were killed after their Pilatus PC-7 Mk II trainer aircraft crashed during a routine training sortie from the Air Force Academy at Dundigal, Telangana which marks the first crash involving the aircraft in nearly a decade.

Key Points:

- Trainer aircraft are specialized planes meant for training pilots and aircrews.
- Since modern military planes are complex and challenging for new pilots, trainers serve as a foundational step.
- The IAF currently operates 75 Pilatus PC-7 Mk II aircraft, which are used for basic training in the first stage of a cadet's flight training.
- The PC-7 is a turbo-prop aircraft with tandem seating, introduced in the 1990s as an upgraded version of the original model from the 1970s.
- The IAF procured 75 of these aircraft from Pilatus Aircraft Ltd (an aerospace manufacturer located in Stans, Switzerland) under a contract signed in 2012, to meet the critical shortage of trainer aircraft urgently needed to carry out the basic flying training for its pilots.

Environment

Cyclone Michaung



DATE: 1st December, 2023

Cyclone Michaung made landfall on 5th December in Bapatla between Nellore and Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh as a "super cyclonic" storm. The tropical cyclone had formed over the Bay of Bengal off the southeast coast of India.

Key Highlights:

- Heavy rainfall was also experienced in parts of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
- By 6th December, 'Michaung' had weakened into a 'deep depression' over central coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- Michaung was named by Myanmar according to the tropical cyclone naming convention.
- The Tamil Nadu government declared a holiday for schools and colleges in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu on the 7th due to severe flooding caused by the Michaung cyclone.
- The Indian Air Force carried out relief activities in the flood-affected areas.
- Continuous rainfall and flooding affected crops in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

International

Economy

Eurozone Economy



DATE: 4th October, 2023

The euro zone economy probably shrank last quarter, according to a survey which showed demand fell in September at the fastest pace in almost three years as indebted consumers reined in spending in the face of rising borrowing costs and higher prices.

Key Points:

- Recent data and surveys suggest that the eurozone economy likely contracted in the third quarter of the year.
- Consumer spending reduced as borrowing costs and prices rose.
- Demand in the region saw a significant decline marking the fastest pace of decrease in nearly three years.
- Several factors contributed to this economic downturn, including increased borrowing costs, higher prices, and cautious consumer spending among indebted households.

Polity & Governance

UAPA Sections Invoked Against News Click



DATE: 9th October, 2023

The online news portal, NewsClick, is under scrutiny due to allegations of receiving illegal funding.

Key Points:

- The funds are believed to have been routed through China and the United States.
- The allegations have led to the registration of an FIR (First Information Report).
- The FIR filed against NewsClick involves the use of various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- The penalties include imprisonment for a minimum of five years, extending to life imprisonment.
- Section 16 of the UAPA defines and penalizes "terrorist acts."
- The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA, provides an alternative legal framework for handling cases related to unlawful activities and terrorism.

Polity & Governance

Israel-Hamas Conflict

Israel's boundaries today

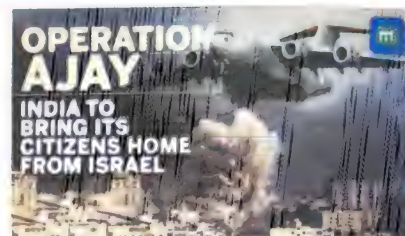


DATE: 10th October, 2023

Recently, the Hamas, the militant group ruling the Gaza Strip have mounted a scathing attack on Israel from the land, air and water leading to multiple casualties.

Key Points:

- This has revived the century-old dispute between Israel-Palestine Conflict once again, necessitating the intervention by global and regional powers.
- Israel, in the recent times, has cemented many peace agreements with neighbouring countries such as UAE, Saudi Arabia etc which is set to feel a jolt due to the recent attack.
- The seeds of the Israel-Palestine conflict were laid in 1917 when the then British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour expressed official support of Britain for a Jewish "national home" in Palestine under the Balfour Declaration.
- The UN presented a partition plan to create independent Jewish and Arab states in Palestine which was not accepted by most of Arab nations.
- In 1948, the Jewish declaration of Israel's independence prompted surrounding Arab states to attack.
- As per the Plan, Jordan controlled the West Bank and Jerusalem's holy sites, and Egypt controlled the Gaza Strip.
- In 1967 war, Israeli forces seized the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank & East Jerusalem from Jordan and Sinai Peninsula & Gaza strip from Egypt.
- "Framework for Peace in the Middle East" brokered by the U.S. set the stage for peace talks between Israel and its neighbours and a resolution to the "Palestinian problem".
- Hamas is regarded as a terrorist organization by the U.S. government.
- In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian Authority's legislative elections.
- The Gaza Strip located between Israel and Egypt.
- It ejected Fatah from Gaza in 2007, splitting the Palestinian movement geographically, as well.
- Under the Oslo Accords Israel and the PLO agree to officially recognize each other and renounce the use of violence.
- The Oslo Accords also established the Palestinian Authority, which received limited autonomy in the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.
- Israel occupied the strip after 1967, but relinquished control of Gaza City and day-to-day administration in most of the territory during the Oslo peace process.
- The Golan Heights is a strategic plateau that Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 war.
- Israel effectively annexed the territory in 1981.
- Recently, the USA has officially recognized Jerusalem and Golan Heights as a part of Israel.

Operation Ajay**DATE:** 12th October, 2023

India has launched Operation Ajay, a dedicated initiative to facilitate the safe return of its citizens from Israel amidst the ongoing developments in the region.

Key Points:

- Special charter flights and other arrangements are being organized to bring back Indian citizens from Israel.
- A flight carrying the fourth batch of 274 Indian nationals evacuated from war-hit Israel by the Union Government under 'Operation Ajay', arrived in the national capital on Sunday afternoon.
- The Indian Embassy in Israel has initiated contact with registered Indian citizens, starting with the first group, for the special flight.
- Subsequent flights will follow, and communication will be made accordingly.
- A 24-hour Control Room has been established to monitor the situation and assist Indian nationals.
- Indian nationals in the region are urged to stay calm, vigilant, and follow security advisories issued by the authorities.
- The Ministry of External Affairs is actively monitoring the situation and disseminating relevant information to citizens in real-time.

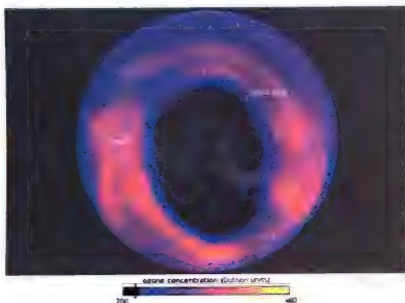
International Relations

Death penalty to Indian Navy personnel by Qatar**DATE:** 26th October, 2023

A court in Qatar has handed down the death penalty to eight former Indian Navy personnel who have been detained in the country for over a year.

Key Points:

- A court in Qatar has handed down the death penalty to eight former Indian Navy personnel who have been detained in the country for over a year.
- The charges against them were not made public by Qatari authorities.
- The Indian government expressed shock over the sentencing and vowed to explore all available legal options to secure the release of its citizens.
- The eight men, including decorated officers who have commanded major Indian warships, were working for Al Dahra Global Technologies and Consultancy Services, a private firm that provided training and related services to Qatar's armed forces and security agencies.
- Their bail pleas were rejected numerous times and their detention was extended by Qatari authorities.

Environment**Antarctic Ozone Hole Grows Larger and Thinner****DATE:** 23rd November 2023

A new study reveals alarming changes in the Antarctic ozone hole, indicating not only a significant increase in size but also a concerning thinning trend during most of the spring.

Key Points:

- Despite earlier signs of recovery since the 2000s, the ozone hole over Antarctica has expanded notably in the last four years, as highlighted in a study published in Nature Communications.
- The study underscores that the Antarctic ozone hole, once on a path to recovery, has experienced substantial expansion and thinning in recent years.
- While the ozone layer was anticipated to recover within four decades, the ozone hole has shown remarkable enlargement in the years 2020-2022.
- The extent and duration of the ozone hole in 2022 were notably similar to the large holes observed in 2020 and 2021.

Reports & Indices**2023 World Malaria Report****DATE:** 1st December, 2023

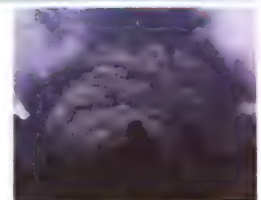
The 2023 World Malaria Report, recently released by the World Health Organization (WHO), sheds light on the alarming malaria situation in India and globally.

**Key Highlights:**

- The 2023 World Malaria Report reveals a global surge with an estimated 249 million cases in 2022, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- Twenty-nine countries accounted for 95% of malaria cases globally. Four countries, Nigeria (27%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12%), Uganda (5%), and Mozambique (4%), accounted for almost half of all malaria cases globally.
- In 2022, India accounted for a staggering 66% of malaria cases in the WHO South-East Asia Region.
- India and Indonesia accounted for about 94% of all malaria deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region.
- The WHO South-East Asia Region, including India, managed to contain malaria over the last two decades, with a 77% reduction in cases and deaths since 2000.
- WHO aimed to reduce malaria incidence and mortality rates by 75% in 2025 and 90% in 2030.
- The WHO launched the E-2025 initiative in 2021.
- The initiative aims to stop the transmission of malaria in 25 countries by 2025.

Environment**Mount Marapi****DATE:** 3rd December, 2023

On 3 December 2023, Mount Marapi, a complex volcano on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, erupted, sending ash as high as 3,000 metres into the air.

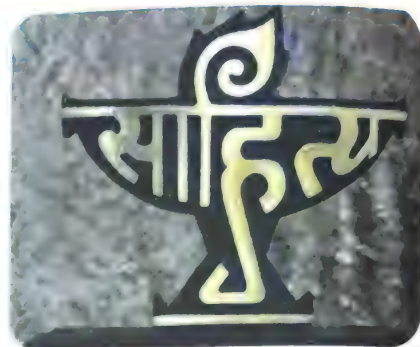
**Key Highlights:**

- Twenty-three hikers were found dead near the crater of the volcano.
- As the most active complex volcano in West Sumatra province, and in proximity to populated areas, Mount Marapi is a significant hazard.

SAHITYA ACADEMY AWARD 2023

DATE : 20th December, 2023

Tamil author Rajasekaran (Devibharathi), Telugu writer T. Patanjali Sastry and Malayalam litterateur E.V. Ramakrishnan were among those named for the Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2023.



Key Points:

- Nine books of poetry, six novels, five short story collections, three essays and one literary study have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards this year.
- Rajasekaran was chosen for his novel Neervazhi Padoom, Mr. Sastry for his short story collection in Telugu Rameshwaram Kaakulu Marikonni Kathalu, and Mr. Ramakrishnan for his literary study Malayala Novelinte Deshakalangal.
- Scholar Lakshmisha Tolpadi will get the award for his collection of essays Mahabharatha Anusandhanada Bharathayatre in Kannada while Bengali author Swapnamay Chakrabarti will receive the award for his novel Jaler Upar Pani.
- The Award in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and an amount of **Rs. 1,00,000/- towards each** will be presented to the awardees at the Award Presentation function.
- The awards recommended by distinguished jury members in 24 languages were approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi.
- The awards relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award, that is between January 2017 and December 31, 2021.

List of Winners:

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Dr. Pranavjyoti Deka Shrestha Galpa (Short Stories)	Pranavjyoti Deka
Bengali	Jabar Pari (Novel)	Swapnamoy Chakraborti
Bodo	Si-Ufai Sarni (Short Stories)	Vinod Sona Minj
Dogri	Daun Sadiya Ek Seer (Poetry-Ghazal)	Vijay Verma
English	Requiem in Raga Janki (Novel)	Neelum Saran Gour
Gujarati	Sairandhree (Epic Novel)	Sandeep Joshi
Hindi	Mujhe Pahachano (Novel)	Sanjeev

IDEAS

Ideas

National

Environment

Country's first bus running on green hydrogen unveiled



DATE: 25th September, 2023

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) achieved a significant milestone in India's transition to clean energy by unveiling the country's first green hydrogen powered bus.

Key Points:

- IOC is a pioneer in harnessing the power of green hydrogen produced through electrolysis of water using electricity from renewable sources.
- This green hydrogen will be used to fuel two buses, which are scheduled for test runs in the National Capital Region.
- These buses will undergo operational trials on designated routes in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
- This initiative coincides with India's commitment to low carbon development and emerging clean energy technologies.

Education

APAAR ID

DATE: 19th October, 2023

The Ministry of Education and Government of India has initiated the APAAR ID, known as the "One Nation One Student ID Card."

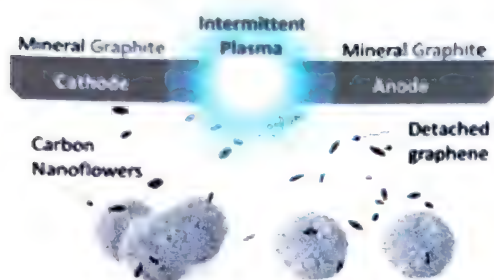


Key Points:

- The groundbreaking program aims to digitally centralize academic data, including degrees, scholarships, rewards, and other credits for students.
- In this article, we will provide you with detailed information about the benefits of the APAAR ID and how to download it from the official website.
- The One Nation One Student ID Card, APAAR ID, is a significant step towards a more organized and accessible academic experience for students in India.
- By registering and downloading your APAAR ID, you can unlock various benefits and conveniently store your academic records.
- With thousands of institutes and millions of students already benefiting from this program, it's a promising development in the education sector.
- The acronym APAAR ID stands for "Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry."
- The Government of India introduced the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC Bank) to administer the issuance of APAAR ID cards.

Energy

Carbon Nanoflorets



DATE: 3rd November, 2023

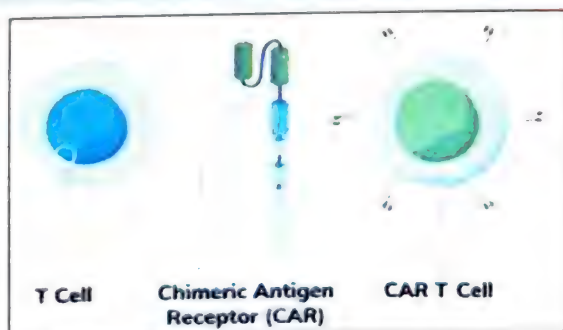
Recently, researchers at IIT Bombay have created carbon nanoflorets capable of converting sunlight into heat with unmatched efficiency.

Key Points:

- The innovative development holds the potential to revolutionize sustainable heating solutions while minimizing the carbon footprint.
- The carbon nanoflorets, developed by researchers from IIT Bombay, demonstrate an impressive light absorption efficiency of 87%.
- They can absorb multiple frequencies of sunlight, including infrared, visible light, and ultraviolet, in stark contrast to traditional solar-thermal materials that typically absorb only visible and ultraviolet light.
- A one-square-meter coating of carbon nanoflorets can vaporize approximately five litres of water within an hour, surpassing the performance of commercial solar stills.
- Coated nanoflorets exhibit exceptional stability with a minimum lifetime of eight years.

Healthcare

CAR-T Cell Therapy



DATE: 5th November, 2023

Recently, The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has granted market authorisation for NexCAR19, India's first indigenously-developed Chimeric Antigen Receptor T cell (CAR-T cell) Therapy.

Key Points:

- India is now one of the first developing countries to have its indigenous CAR-T and gene therapy platform.
- NexCar19 is a type of CAR-T and gene therapy developed indigenously in India by Immuno ACT, which is a company incubated at IIT Bombay.
- NexCAR19 therapy is intended for people with B-cell lymphomas who have not responded to standard treatments like chemotherapy and have experienced relapse or recurrence of cancer.
- The process commences with the patient donating blood at a transfusion center. The T-cells are genetically modified and reinfused into the patient within a period of 7-10 days.
- It leads to significantly lower drug-related toxicities. It causes minimal damage to neurons and the central nervous system, a condition known as neurotoxicity.

Polity & Governance

Innovative Approach to Tackle Illegal Sand Mining in Bihar



DATE: 22nd November 2023

Authorities in Bihar's Bhojpur district have adopted a unique strategy to curb illegal sand mining by constructing pillars in the Sone river on either side of the Arrah-Sahar bridge.

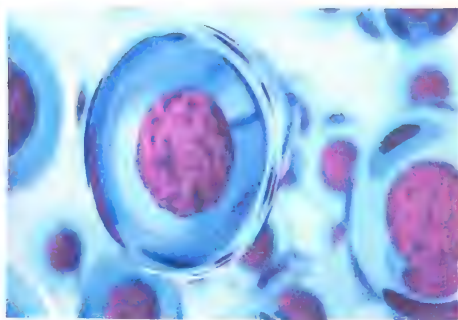
Key Points:

- Bhojpur and Patna, reporting the highest number of illegal sand mining cases in Bihar, incur significant annual losses estimated at Rs 7,000 crore to the state exchequer.

- Built over the past three to four months, the pillars in the Sone river act as a physical barrier, preventing small boats from crossing under the Arrah-Sahar bridge. This strategic move is part of ongoing efforts to combat the illicit sand trade.
- Bhojpur, in particular, has faced scrutiny from both the police and the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which has intermittently imposed bans on sand mining in Bihar since 2017.

Science & Technology

Scientists Create 2D Lysozyme Protein Monolayer



DATE: 23rd November 2023

Scientists from the (IASST), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in North-East India, have successfully fabricated a 2D protein monolayer using lysozyme molecules.

Key points:

- Lysozyme, a crucial protein found in mucosal secretions and a principal component of airway fluid, serves as a model protein for understanding diseases like Amyloidosis.
- Amyloidosis is a rare condition characterized by the accumulation of a protein called amyloid in various organs.
- The technique employed for this innovative creation is known as the Langmuir-Blodgett (LB) technique. Applications and Future Implications of model
- The closely packed lysozyme monolayers generated through the LB method present an exciting avenue for studying diverse chemical and physical properties in a 2D protein environment.
- The deposited LB films of lysozyme hold potential as protein nanotemplates, offering opportunities for the crystallization of proteins of interest.

Healthcare

India's First On-Demand Blood Platform



DATE: 1st December, 2023

Blod.in launches Blod+, India's first on-demand blood logistics platform for hospitals and blood banks, addressing the alarming issue of blood wastage in healthcare facilities across the country.

Ke Points:

- The innovation aims to revolutionize blood management and delivery, addressing the alarming issue of blood wastage in healthcare facilities across the country.
- Blod+ is a healthcare software and logistics platform launched by Blod.in.
- It aims to target the alarming issue of blood wastage in healthcare facilities across India.
- One of the standout features of Blod+ is its ability to empower blood banks in distributing blood and its components more efficiently to hospitals within its network.
- About 6.5 lakh (650,000) units of blood are wasted annually in India, leading to approximately 12,000 daily deaths.

Rural & Urban Development

Amplifi 2.0



DATE: 1st December, 2023

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in India embarked on a groundbreaking initiative to centralize and streamline raw data from cities across the country.

Key Points:

- Launched as the Amplifi 2.0 (Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-ready urban India) portal, this endeavour aims to facilitate data-driven policy-making, empower academics, researchers, and engage stakeholders in the urban development process.
- The platform, operational for three weeks, has successfully onboarded 225 urban local bodies (ULB), with data currently available for 150 cities.
- The Urban Outcomes Framework 2022, developed by the National Institute of Urban Affairs and Ernst and Young for the Ministry, emphasizes a move from indices to data.
- The Ministry utilized data from ULBs to rank cities based on four indices—the Ease of Living Index, Municipal Performance Index, Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework, and Data Maturity Assessment Framework.

International

Conferences & Summits**First International Campus on Zanzibar Island****DATE:** 7th November, 2023

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has become the first Indian Institute of Technology to set up an international campus, opening its doors on an island in East Africa, Tanzania.

Key Points:

- Inaugurated by the President of Zanzibar, Hussein Ali Mwinyi, this historic initiative signifies a brighter educational future, facilitated by a memorandum of understanding between India and Tanzania, ushering in a new era of global education and cooperation.
- To kickstart its operations, the IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus is offering Bachelor of Science (BS) and Master of Technology (MTech) programs, with a focus on Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus boasts modern and comprehensive facilities to cater to the needs of its students.
- The IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus opened its doors for classes during the academic year 2023-24, with the first semester commencing in October 2023.

Environment**World's 1st Transatlantic Flight Takes Off****DATE:** 30th November 30, 2023

Virgin Atlantic has made history with the world's first transatlantic flight powered by 100% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

Key Points:

- **Significance:** Flight100 is a milestone in sustainable aviation, demonstrating the feasibility of SAF as a safe replacement for traditional jet fuel.
- **Aircraft:** The flight is operated by a Virgin Boeing 787, equipped with Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engines.
- **Fuel Composition:** The SAF used in Flight100 is a "unique dual blend" comprising 88% HEFA (made from waste fats) and 12% SAK (derived from corn waste).
- **Passengers:** While not carrying paying passengers or cargo, notable passengers include Virgin Atlantic founder Richard Branson, CEO Shai Weiss, and UK Transport Minister Mark Harper.
- **Route:** The Boeing 787, filled with 50 tonnes of SAF, is flying from London to New York, showcasing the potential of "green fuel" for long-haul flights.



People in News

National

Sanjeev Mantri



DATE: 25th September, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: ICICI Lombard General Insurance has appointed Sanjeev Mantri as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company.

Key Points:

- The move follows the resignation of Bhargav Dasgupta, the outgoing MD & CEO, who stepped down ahead of completing his 15-year tenure due to recent regulatory changes.
- Sanjeev Mantri joined ICICI Lombard in 2015 as the Executive Director, where he headed various retail divisions and was responsible for distribution across different channels.
- Sanjeev Mantri's tenure is set to begin on December 1, 2023, or upon approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- Sanjeev Mantri was born in 1972, in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Sanjeev Mantri works for the company as a full-time director.
- He graduated from Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics with a bachelor's in

commerce, and he is a graduate of Grad CWA and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

Waheeda Rehman



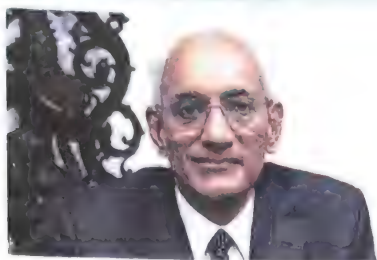
DATE: 26th September, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting announced that Waheeda Rehman will receive the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honor in Indian cinema this year.

Key Points:

- Waheeda Rehman's illustrious career is synonymous with excellence.
- She has worked in over 90 films. Known for her versatility, she has delivered unforgettable performances in a myriad of iconic films including "Pyaasa," "CID," "Guide," "Kaagaz Ke Phool," "Khamoshi," and "Trishul."
- She was honoured with India's civilian awards the Padma Shri in 1972 and the Padma Bhushan in 2011.
- Waheeda Rehman was born on 3 February 1938 to a Deccani Muslim family in Chengalpet of present-day Tamil Nadu, India.

Srinivasan K. Swamy



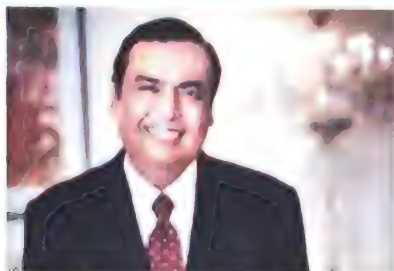
DATE: 26th September, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Srinivasan K. Swamy, the Executive Chairman of R.K. Swamy Hansa Group, has been elected as the Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) for the term 2023-2024.

Key Points:

- Srinivasan K. Swamy, Executive Chairman of R.K. Swamy Hansa Group, has been unanimously elected Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) for the year 2023-2024.
- Mr. Swamy currently serves as Chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations.
- He was earlier President /Chairman of the International Advertising Association (IAA), IAA India Chapter, Confederation of Asian Advertising Agency Associations, Advertising Agencies Association of India, Advertising Standards Council of India, All India Management Association, Madras Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Madras Management Association.
- Swamy was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Advertising Agencies Association of India.

Mukesh Ambani



DATE: 29th September, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Mukesh Ambani is the richest man of India for consecutive 14 years, followed by Gautam Adani, Syrus Poonawalla and Shiv Nadar.

Key Points:

- Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani (born 19 April 1957) is an Indian-Gujarati billionaire businessman.
- He is currently the chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries, India's most valuable company by market value.
- Reliance Industries forms a significant part of his wealth, which is involved in diverse sectors such as petrochemicals, oil and gas, retail, telecom and more.
- India has about **167 billionaires** which put the country at the **third position in the world after the US and China**.

Raghu Srinivasan

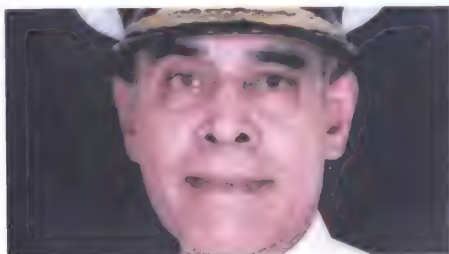


DATE: 3rd October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Lieutenant General Raghu Srinivasan assumed the role of the 28th Director General (DG) of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

Key Points:

- Srinivasan is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy in Khadakwasla and the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun, where he was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in 1987.
- His illustrious service record includes participation in key military operations such as Operation Vijay, Operation Rakshak, and Operation Parakram.
- One of Lt Gen Srinivasan's most significant areas of expertise lies in serving along India's border regions, particularly in Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir.
- His extensive experience in these challenging terrains has equipped him with a unique perspective on the infrastructural needs of the regions.

Tarun Sobti**DATE:** 3rd October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti, AVSM, VSM, took over as the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff marking a significant transition in the leadership of the Indian Navy.

Key Points:

- With a distinguished career spanning over 35 years, Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role.
- Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1988 embarking on a journey that would see him become a distinguished leader in the maritime domain.
- He specialized in Navigation and Direction, a critical aspect of naval operations.
- Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti's tenure as a Flag Officer included commanding several crucial naval assets, including INS Nishank, INS Kora and INS Kolkata.

Ramaswamy N**DATE:** 6th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) made a significant announcement regarding the appointment of its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), Ramaswamy N.

Key Points:

- The appointment, effective from October 1, 2023, follows a decision by the Ministry of Finance,

Government of India, and marks a transition in leadership at the renowned insurance institution.

- GIC Re welcomed Ramaswamy N as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) with effect from October 1, 2023.
- The appointment of Ramaswamy N follows the standard succession planning procedures as Devesh Srivastava, the outgoing CMD, concluded his four-year term at the end of September 2023 upon reaching the age of 60.
- He began his career with GIC Re as a direct recruit officer in 1988.
- During his tenure at GIC Re, Ramaswamy N has managed a diverse portfolio of non-life insurance classes, including Fire, Engineering, Miscellaneous, Motor, Liability, Aviation, Marine, and Agriculture.

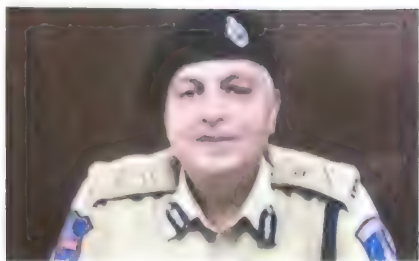
Navneet Munot**DATE:** 11th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) has recently elected Navneet Munot, the Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Asset Management, as the Chairman during a Board meeting.

Key Points:

- Munot, a Chartered Accountant and a CFA charter holder, boasts over three decades of experience in the financial services sector.
- He will succeed **A Balasubramanian**, Managing Director of Aditya Birla Sun Life Asset Management Company, who will complete two consecutive terms in October.
- A Balasubramanian, the outgoing Chairman of AMFI, has played a pivotal role in the organization.
- Having served two consecutive terms, his leadership has been instrumental in shaping the mutual fund industry in India.

Sandeep Shandilya



DATE: 14th October, 2023

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has appointed **WHY IN NEWS:** Sandeep Shandilya, a senior IPS officer holding the rank of Additional Director General of Police, as the New Police Commissioner of Hyderabad.

Key Points:

- Shandilya, an officer of the 1993 IPS batch, is presently serving as the **director of the Telangana State Police Academy (TSPA)**.
- The decision comes after the transfer of the former police commissioner, **CV Anand**.
- Sandeep Shandilya has had a distinguished career in the Indian Police Service.
- His journey through various positions within the police force is a testament to his experience and leadership.
- In the year **2006**, he served as the **Deputy Commissioner of Police for the South Zone**, demonstrating his capabilities in maintaining law and order.

B K Mohanty



DATE: 15th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) announced Bijay Kumar Mohanty has taken charge as the Director (Finance) of the company with effect from 12 October, 2023.

Key Points:

- The appointment of Dr. Mohanty as Director (Finance) Dr. Mohanty, a highly respected senior finance professional with an impressive career spanning over 25 years in the Indian power sector, brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience that promises to enrich IREDA's leadership.
- In an order issued by the **Ministry of New & Renewable Energy**, Dr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty was appointed to the post for a **period of five years** from the date he assumed charge or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- Chartered Accountant B K Mohanty was a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).
- He has over 40 years of experience.
- He has experience dealing with clients belonging to the Mining Industry, Educational Industry and Chemicals Industry.

Siddharth Mridul

DATE: 17th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Justice Siddharth Mridul was appointed as the chief justice of Manipur High Court three months after the Supreme Court Collegium recommendation.



Key Points:

- The Centre had notified the Supreme Court that the appointment of a new chief justice of Manipur High Court will be issued 'shortly', stating that the file has been cleared and the rest of the process will follow soon.
- The top court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud had on July 5 recommended the appointment of Delhi High Court judge Justice Siddharth Mridul as the chief justice of the Manipur High Court, amid the ethnic turmoil in the border state.
- The SC was hearing two petitions filed by the Advocates Association, Bengaluru, and another by an NGO seeking contempt of court proceedings against the Centre for alleged delay in deciding on the recommendations of the Supreme Court Collegium in the matter of appointment and transfer of judges.

Arindam Bagchi



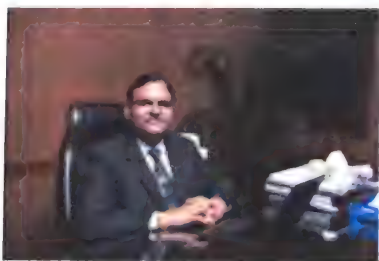
DATE: 18th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Arindam Bagchi has been appointed as India's next Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva.

Key Points:

- **Arindam Bagchi**, currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as **India's next Ambassador/Permanent Representative** to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva.
- The significant appointment marks a key change in India's diplomatic representation in Geneva.
- Arindam Bagchi, a seasoned Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer from the 1995 batch, has a rich and diverse background in the foreign service.
- During his tenure as MEA spokesperson, Arindam Bagchi demonstrated adept handling of media discussions on critical issues such as the Sino-Indian border dispute in eastern Ladakh, the Indian government's strategy to combat COVID-19, and New Delhi's role as the G20 presidency.
- Arindam Bagchi's appointment as India's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva reflects his commendable diplomatic journey and expertise.

Dr. Meenesh Shah



DATE: 19th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Dr. Meenesh Shah, the Chairman and Managing Director of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), has been elected to the Board of the International Dairy Federation (IDF).

Key Points:

- Dr. Meenesh Shah has an illustrious career of more than 37 years in Dairy sector.
- Dr. Shah is also Chairman of MDFVPL, IIL, IDMC, NDDB Dairy Services & NDDB MRIDA, furthering the objectives of NDDB and catering to various value chain of our animal husbandry and dairying sector from animal & human health, dairy machineries, institution building, marketing of milk & milk products to manure management.
- With a long history of involvement with IDF, Dr. Shah's contributions have been instrumental in promoting India's unique smallholder-based dairying system on the global stage.

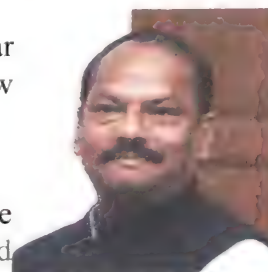
Raghubar Das

DATE: 19th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Raghubar Das is appointed as the new governor of Odisha.

Key Points:

- Raghubar Das served as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand from 2014 to 2019.
- He is the only leader who completed a full five-year term as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand.
- Das was elected as an MLA in 1995 when Bihar and Jharkhand were one state.
- Presently, he is a national vice president of the BJP.



Indra Sena Reddy Nallu



DATE: 19th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Tripura's New Governor is Indra Sena Reddy Nallu.

Key Points:

- Nallu Indrasena Reddy is a three-time MLA and a prominent BJP leader from Telangana.

- He previously held the position of national secretary of the BJP.
- President Murmu appointed him as the Governor of Tripura, recognizing his political experience and dedication.

Ashok Vaswani



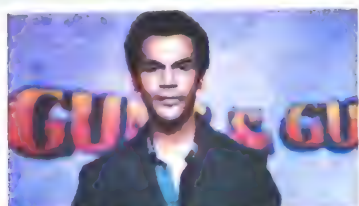
DATE: 23rd October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Kotak Mahindra Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, has welcomed Ashok Vaswani as its next **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer**.

Key Points:

- Ashok Vaswani's appointment as the Managing Director and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank is for a three-year term, effective from the date he assumes office, expected to be around January 1, 2024.
- Vaswani, whom Kotak describes as a "global Indian," is a veteran of Barclays Plc in the UK and Citigroup Inc. in Asia-Pacific.
- At Barclays Bank, UK, he has worked as the CEO.
- Subsequently, he has also worked as CEO of the Global Consumer, Private, Corporate and Payments businesses of the bank.
- He has also worked as a member of the Group Executive Committee.
- Vaswani has a Bachelor of Commerce, Economics, and Accountancy degree from the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics of Bombay University.

Rajkummar Rao



DATE: 26th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The Election Commission of India (EC) is set to appoint actor Rajkummar Rao as its 'National Icon' in preparation for the upcoming assembly elections in five states and the 2024 general elections.

Key Points:

- Actor Rajkummar Rao, celebrated for his portrayal of a principled government clerk in the Hindi film "Newton," tasked with conducting elections in the Naxal-affected areas of Chhattisgarh, is set to be inducted as a National Icon by the Election Commission (EC).
- In becoming a National Icon, Rajkummar Rao joins the ranks of other distinguished individuals recognized by the Election Commission.
- The EC has acknowledged actors like Pankaj Tripathi and Aamir Khan, as well as sports legends including Sachin Tendulkar, M. S. Dhoni, and M. C. Mary Kom.
- Rajkummar Rao is an Indian actor known for his work in Hindi films. He has appeared in more than 30 films since 2010, and is the recipient of several accolades including a National Film Award, four Filmfare Awards and an Asia Pacific Screen Award.
- After studying acting at the Film and Television Institute of India, Rao made his acting debut with the anthology film Love Sex Aur Dhokha (2010) and took on supporting roles in the films Gangs of Wasseypur – Part 2 and Talaash: The Answer Lies Within (both 2012).

Amol Muzumdar



DATE: 27th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Amol Muzumdar, the former Mumbai batsman, has been named as the head coach of the India women's national team.

Key Points

- The decision came after a three-member cricket advisory committee of the **Board of Control for**

Cricket in India (BCCI) conducted interviews with shortlisted candidates for the position.

- Their unanimous recommendation for Muzumdar to take on the role has been welcomed by cricket enthusiasts and the sporting community alike.
- Amol Anil Muzumdar (born 11 November 1974) is an Indian cricketer and coach who previously played for the cricket teams of Mumbai and Assam.
- He was primarily a right-handed batsman.
- He held the record for the most runs scored in the Ranji Trophy, India's premier domestic first-class cricket competition, beating the record previously held by Amarjit Kaypee.

Deepesh Nanda

DATE: 2nd November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Tata Power has appointed Deepesh Nanda as the President-Renewables and the CEO & MD of its subsidiary, Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL).



Key Points:

- Deepesh Nanda, with 28 years of extensive experience in the industry, brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his new role. His professional journey has seen him excel in various roles across reputable companies like GE, Flowserve, and Tyco.
- Deepesh Nanda's academic journey includes being an alumnus of Annamalai University.
- He furthered his education by completing his MBA from the Open University Business School, Milton Keynes, UK.
- His extensive leadership training at GE Gas Power refined his skills and prepared him to excel in the dynamic energy sector.

Shiv Nadar



DATE: 3rd November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: HCLTech founder Shiv Nadar and his family have retained the top spot on the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2023.

Key Points:

- Shiv Nadar, the founder of HCL Technologies, has retained the title of the country's most generous man, followed by Wipro founder Azim Premji.
- According to the EdelGive Hurun India's Philanthropy List for 2023, Shiv Nadar is India's leading philanthropist with an annual donation of ₹2,042 crore.
- Shiv Nadar is an Indian billionaire industrialist and philanthropist.
- He is the founder and chairman emeritus of HCL Technologies and the Shiv Nadar Foundation.
- Nadar founded HCL in the mid-1970s and transformed the IT hardware company into an IT enterprise over the next three decades.

Rajendra Menon



DATE: 4th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Former Chief Justice Rajendra Menon of the Delhi High Court has been re-elected as the Chairman of the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) for a four-year term ensuring his leadership until June 6, 2027.

Key Points:

- This marks his second consecutive term as Chairman, having initially been nominated for the position in 2019.
- Justice Menon's legal journey has been marked by significant appointments and contributions to the Indian judiciary.
- Justice Menon began his judicial career as an additional judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on April 1, 2002, and his dedication and expertise led to his elevation to the position of a permanent judge on March 21, 2003.

Surendra Adhana

DATE: 4th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Senior Indian diplomat, Surendra Adhana, has been re-elected to serve on the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) at the United Nations for the term 2024-26.



Key Points:

- The Consultative Committee is an expert committee of 21 members elected by the General Assembly for a term of three years on the basis of broad geographical representation.
- The main functions of this Committee are to examine and report on the budget presented to the General Assembly on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General, to advise on any administrative and budgetary matters referred to the General Assembly, and to examine proposals for the financial arrangements of United Nations agencies.
- It also considers the auditors' reports on the accounts of the United Nations and its agencies and reports to the General Assembly.
- Surendra Adhana is a senior Indian diplomat.
- The tenure of Surendra Adhana will be from 2024 to 2026.

Rohit Rishi

DATE: 5th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Rohit Rishi has taken on the role of Executive Director at the Bank of Maharashtra, succeeding Shri A.B. Vijayakumar.



Key Points:

- The appointment is for a tenure of three years, starting from November 1, 2023 in place of Shri A.B. Vijayakumar.
- His extensive experience, academic qualifications, and professional acumen make him a valuable addition to the bank's leadership team.
- Rohit Rishi's professional journey started in 1995 when he joined Indian Bank as an Industrial Development Officer.

- With over 28 years of experience, he has successfully navigated through diverse aspects of the banking industry.
- Throughout his career, Rishi has demonstrated his ability to thrive in diverse roles, contributing significantly to the growth and transformation of the organizations he served.

Manoranjan Mishra



DATE: 6th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Manoranjan Mishra as the new Executive Director, effective from November 1, 2023 to oversee three crucial departments within the RBI.

Key Points:

- With over three decades of experience in the RBI and a strong background in various aspects of banking and finance, Mishra's appointment brings a wealth of expertise to the central bank.
- Mishra has a post-graduate degree in economics and an MBA in banking and finance.
- Additionally, he obtained a master's degree in finance and financial regulation from Aston Business School in the United Kingdom.
- His strong academic qualifications have enhanced his abilities in the finance field.

Heeralal Samariya



DATE: 7th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Shri Heeralal Samariya assumed office as the Chief Information Commissioner.

Key Points:

- A swearing-in ceremony was held in the Central Information Commission to mark the assumption of office by the new appointees.
- During the ceremony, Shri Heeralal Samariya administered the oath of office to the newly appointed Information Commissioners.
- He has a Bachelor's degree with Honours in Electronics & Communication Engineering.
- Before joining the Central Information Commission as an Information Commissioner, Smt. Anandi Ramalingam held the position of Chairman & Managing Director at Bharat Electronics Ltd. under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

Pankaj Tripathi**DATE:** 9th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has appointed Bollywood actor Pankaj Tripathi as the "UPI Safety Ambassador."

Key Points:

- The strategic partnership aims to address growing concerns about the safety of digital payment systems, particularly the United Payments Interface (UPI).
- The digital payments ecosystem in India has experienced remarkable growth, driven by government initiatives, increased internet and Smartphone penetration and the surge in e-commerce activities.
- As of the end of the calendar year 2022, UPI's total transaction value reached Rs.125.95 trillion, marking a substantial 1.75 times year-on-year growth, as reported by NPCI.

Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar**DATE:** 14th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Rear Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar took charge of the Eastern Fleet from Rear Admiral Gurcharan Singh in a ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam.

Key Points:

- The change of command ceremony, marking the transition from Rear Admiral Gurcharan Singh, took place at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam.
- Rear Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar's naval journey began on July 1, 1990, when he was commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- With a specialization in Navigation & Direction, Rear Admiral Dhankhar has accumulated an impressive array of qualifications and experiences throughout his career.
- The newly appointed Flag Officer is an alumnus of the prestigious Naval Academy, where he laid the foundation for his naval education.
- Additionally, he has successfully completed the Defence Services Staff College and pursued his Higher Command Course in Japan, showcasing his commitment to continuous learning and professional development.
- During his 33-year career, Rear Admiral Dhankhar has served in various specialist appointments onboard warships, including notable vessels such as Pondicherry, Godavari, Kora, and Mysore.
- In recognition of his valour and dedication, Rear Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar was awarded the Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) in 2015.

Alok Sharma**DATE:** 18th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Alok Sharma, a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, has been named the new director of the Special Protection Group (SPG), taking over from the late SPG chief Arun Kumar Sinha.

Key Points:

- Alok Sharma, who currently serves as the additional director general of SPG, assumes the leadership role with immediate effect, according to a government order approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- A resident of Aligarh, Sharma is a science graduate with a B.Tech (mechanical) degree.
- He joined the IPS in 1991.
- He has held several important positions in Uttar Pradesh — he was Meerut IG and after his promotion, he was shifted to Police Training School in Meerut as ADG in 2016.

Isha Ambani

DATE: 20th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: RBI has approved the appointment of Isha Ambani, Anshuman Thakur, and Hitesh Sethia as directors of Jio Financial Services, signaling a pivotal moment in shaping the future trajectory of the company.

**Key Points:**

- Isha Ambani, a prominent figure in the business world and a key player in the success of Reliance Retail, has been appointed as one of the directors.
- A graduate from Yale University with a double major in Psychology and South Asian Studies, and an MBA from Stanford University, Isha Ambani's credentials reflect a strong academic foundation.
- She is widely recognized for her instrumental role in conceptualizing and launching Jio in India in 2016.
- Currently serving in the executive leadership team at Reliance Retail, Isha Ambani is spearheading the expansion of the company into new categories, geographies, and formats.

Vinay Tonse

DATE: 21st November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Vinay Tonse appointed Managing Director of SBI until November 30, 2025, filling the vacancy left by Swaminathan Janakiraman's appointment as Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank.

Key Points:

- As the deputy Managing Director, Vinay M. Tonse had been **overseeing the Corporate Accounts Group (CAG)**, which manages relationships with large corporate clients.
- In **1988**, he commenced his journey with the State Bank of India as a **Probationary Officer**.
- Throughout his extensive career, he has successfully spearheaded significant assignments and projects for the State Bank of India.

Girish Chandra Murmu

DATE: 22nd November, 2023

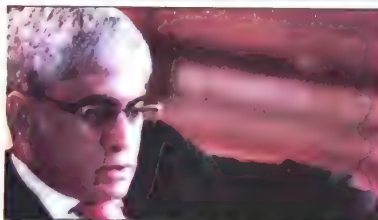
WHY IN NEWS: India's CAG Girish Chandra Murmu elected vice-chair of UN external auditors' panel.

Key Points:

- Girish Chandra Murmu actively participated in the sixty-third session of the Panel of External Auditors, which took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
- Girish Chandra Murmu (born 21 November 1959) is the 14th Comptroller and Auditor General of India and the external auditor of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- He is also the chairman of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors and the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.
- He is currently the external auditor of the WHO (2020-2023), succeeding the Auditor General of the Philippines.

Ishwak Singh**DATE:** 24th November, 2023**WHY IN NEWS:** Ishwak Singh won the Best Actor award at the Stars Asian International Film Festival (SAIFF) for his performance in the film 'Berlin.'**Key Point:**

- Ishwak Singh is an Indian actor who primarily works in Hindi-language television series.
- Following small roles in several films, he became known for starring in the series Paatal Lok (2020) and Rocket Boys (2022–2023), receiving nominations for the Filmfare OTT Awards.
- He has since starred in the horror series Adhura and the second season of Made in Heaven, both in 2023.
- Ishwak Singh was born in New Delhi, India.
- He studied to be an architect, and ventured into acting by joining Asmita Theatre, a theatre group in Delhi.

Narayan Seshadri**DATE:** 2nd December, 2023**WHY IN NEWS:** Former KPMG managing partner, Narayan Seshadri, is set to assume the role of Chairman at IDRCL (India Debt Resolution Company Limited), the government-backed Bad Bank, following the resignation of Diwakar Gupta.**Key Points:**

- Narayan, a Qualified Chartered Accountant, started his career with Arthur Anderson.
- He subsequently joined KPMG and rose to become Managing Partner of the Business Advisory Practice of the firm in India.
- He possesses expertise in strategic planning, good management practices and financial engineering.

- He served on the Boards of Halcyon Resources and Management Pvt. Ltd., AstraZeneca Pharma India Ltd., Sundaram Investment Ltd., IRIS Business Services Ltd., A2O Software India Pvt. Ltd., Magma Fincorp. Ltd., Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd., Wabco India Ltd., Tranzmute Capital & Management Private Limited, SBI Capital Markets Ltd., Radiant Life Care Pvt. Ltd., Halcyon Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.

Kanchan Devi**DATE:** 4th December, 2023**WHY IN NEWS:** Kanchan Devi became the first Woman Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), operating under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.**Key Points:**

- This marks a historic milestone, with Kanchan becoming the first woman officer to ascend to this esteemed position within the premier council operating under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.
- Kanchan Devi brings to her new role an impressive track record of over 30 years in the realm of forestry.
- Prior to her recent appointment, Kanchan served as a faculty member at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) in Dehradun.
- Her contributions to forestry education have been significant, shaping the minds of aspiring foresters.
- Beyond academia, Kanchan actively engaged in uplifting rural communities by implementing, analyzing, and recommending updates to prevailing forest policies.
- During her tenure at ICFRE, where she served as Deputy Director for the past four years, Kanchan played a pivotal role in advancing forestry education.

Jithesh John

DATE: 6th December, 2023

WHY IS NEWS: Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) confirms Jithesh John, a seasoned Indian Economic Service Officer as the new Executive Director marking a significant appointment.



Key Points:

- Jithesh John brings a wealth of expertise to his new role.
- Holding a postgraduate degree in Economics, he has accumulated over 21 years of experience within the Government of India, serving in various capacities.
- Prior to this appointment, John served as an economic adviser in the Ministry of Power, showcasing his versatility in navigating different sectors.
- Jithesh John, a 2001 batch Indian Economic Service Officer, has taken charge as Executive Director of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

Anand Kripalu



DATE: 8th December, 2023

WHY IS NEWS: Anand Kripalu takes the charge as Chairperson and Independent Director at Swiggy.

Key Points:

- Prior to this role, Anand Kripalu held pivotal positions in several renowned organizations.
- Notably, he served as the Managing Director, CEO, and Member of the Diageo Global Executive Committee at DIAGEO India.
- His career also includes significant roles at Mondelez International as the President of India and S.A. Cadbury Plc as the President of Asia, and Unilever as the Managing Director of East Africa operations.

- Anand Kripalu holds a Bachelor of Technology in Electronics from IIT, Madras, and an MBA from IIM, Calcutta.
- He completed his Advanced Management Program at Wharton Business School.
- Swiggy, a prominent player in the online food ordering and delivery space, has made a strategic move by appointing Anand Kripalu as the Chairperson and Independent Director of its Board.

Rajiv Anand



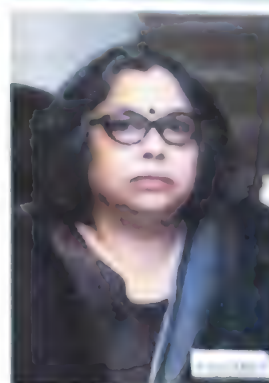
DATE: 8th December, 2023

WHY IS NEWS: Max Life Insurance appoints Rajiv Anand as Chairman.

Key Points:

- The Board, in response, approved the appointment of Rajiv Anand as the new Chairman, marking a pivotal moment in the company's leadership.
- Anand, previously a non-executive director of Max Life, had been nominated by Axis Bank Ltd. to assume the role.
- Max New York Life (MNYL) holds the distinction of being the first private sector insurance company incorporated in India on July 11, 2000.

Parama Sen



DATE: 14th December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The Centre has filled all three part-time member posts in the PFRDA board with the recent appointment of Parama Sen, who is the Additional Secretary in the Department of Expenditure.

Key Points:

- Parama Sen, a 1994 batch Indian Audit and Accounts Services (IAAS) officer, assumes the role, succeeding Anne George Mathew, who vacated the position earlier this year.
- The PFRDA board consists of a chairman, three whole-time members, and three part-time members. The Member (Law) post, vacant since May last year, remains unfilled.
- The National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) have exhibited a robust Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of over 20% in the last five years.

International

Mohamed Muizzu



DATE: 3rd October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Pro-China Leader Mohamed Muizzu wins Maldives Presidential Election.

Key Points:

- Mohamed Muizzu, a pro-China candidate from the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), won the Maldives presidential election with over 53% of the vote in a runoff.
- In the first round of voting, Muizzu led with approximately 46 percent of the votes, while Ibrahim Solih trailed with 39 percent.
- Mohamed Muizzu is a Maldivian politician who is the President-elect of the Maldives, due to take office on 17 November 2023.
- Solih was first elected to the People's Majlis in 1994, aged 30, as the MP from his home atoll of Faadhippolhu.
- He played a leading role in the formation of the Maldivian Democratic Party.

Mahsa Amini



DATE: 20th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Mahsa Amini, the 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman who died in police custody in Iran last year, sparking worldwide protests against the country's conservative Islamic theocracy, has been awarded the European Union's top human rights prize.

Key Points:

- The 22-year-old died in custody after allegedly violating the strict Iranian hijab (headscarf) rule for women.
- Her death sparked protests that presented the most serious challenge to the Iranian authorities in decades.
- The annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought recognizes human rights activists and dissidents.
- Her death generated a global movement known as "Woman, Life, Freedom," calling for an end to Iran's imposition of a headscarf on all women and other discriminatory laws.

Mike Johnson



DATE: 28th October, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Mike Johnson, a relatively lesser-known Republican from Louisiana, has been elected as the new speaker of the US House of Representatives.

Key Points:

- He has earned the nickname “MAGA Mike” among his hard-right colleagues, a reference to Trump’s campaign slogan “Make America Great Again”, which continues to be associated with Trumpian ideals.
- James Michael Johnson was an American politician serving as the 56th speaker of the United States House of Representatives since October 25, 2023.
- A member of the Republican Party, Johnson is in his fourth House term, having represented Louisiana’s 4th congressional district since 2017.
- Johnson was elected to the Louisiana statehouse in 2015 and ran for Congress successfully in 2016.
- He is the first Louisianan to become speaker and the first southerner to serve as speaker since Republican Newt Gingrich of Georgia in the 1990s.

Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar



DATE: 28th October, 2023

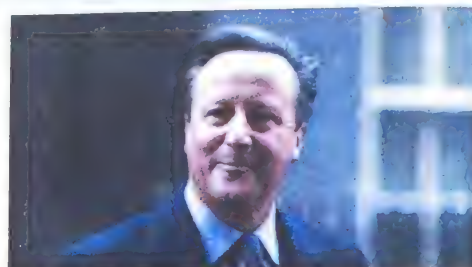
WHY IN NEWS: Malaysia’s rotating monarchy system has chosen Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar of Johor state as the country’s new king.

Key Points:

- This decision, made within Malaysia’s distinctive rotating monarchy system, marks a significant transition for the nation.

- Since gaining independence from Britain in 1957, Malaysia has upheld a distinctive monarchy system where nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns serving as the king for five-year terms.
- At the age of 64, Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, the influential ruler of southern Johor state, has been elected as Malaysia’s new king.
- Sultan Ibrahim ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar was the 25th Sultan of Johor and the 5th Sultan of Modern Johor.
- Sultan Ibrahim is the founder of the annual motorcycling tour event, Kembara Mahkota Johor.

David Cameron



DATE: 14th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Rishi Sunak appointed David Cameron as Foreign Secretary, Victoria Atkins as the new Health Secretary, and Steve Barclay for the role of the Environment Secretary.

Key Points:

- Cameron brings a wealth of experience, having served as the country’s leader from 2010 to 2016.
- His tenure as Prime Minister was marked by the divisive Brexit referendum, ultimately resulting in the U.K.’s departure from the European Union.
- He served as the Leader of the Conservative Party from 2005 to 2016, and held the position of Leader of the Opposition from 2005 to 2010.

Javier Milei



DATE: 20th November, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Argentinians have elected Javier Milei as their next president, a self-proclaimed anarcho-capitalist whose sensational rhetoric has drawn comparisons to former U.S. President Donald Trump.

Key Point:

- With **55.8% of the votes**, Milei's victory marks the widest margin since **Argentina's return to democracy in 1983**, defying all poll predictions.
- Milei, known for his wild appearance and sensational rhetoric, **pledged economic shock therapy and vowed to slash the size of the state during his campaign**.
- Javier Gerardo Milei (born 22 October 1970) is an Argentine politician, economist, and author who is the president-elect of Argentina.
- Before entering politics, Milei gained notability as an economist, as the author of multiple books on economics and politics, and for his distinct political philosophy.
- As an economist, Milei is a vocal proponent of the Austrian School.
- He has critiqued the fiscal policies of various Argentine administrations and advocates reduced government spending.

Arshia Sattar



DATE: 1st December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Renowned author and translator Arshia Sattar has added another feather to her cap, being honored with the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government.

Key Points:

- The prestigious award was presented by Thierry Mathou, the ambassador of France to India, in a ceremony held at the Consulate General of France in Bengaluru.
- Arshia Sattar, aged 63 and based in Bengaluru, has made significant contributions to Indian literature and mythology.

- Notable among her works are translations of epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as well as tales from **Kathasaritsagara**.
- Sattar obtained her PhD in South Asian Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago in 1990.
- Her literary prowess extends to creating engaging books for children, with "The Mahabharata for Children" earning her the Sahitya Akademi Prize for Children's Literature in 2022.

Andry Rajoelina

DATE: 1st December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Andry Nirina Rajoelina is a French-Malagasy politician and businessman who is the president-elect of Madagascar since November 2023.



Key Points:

- Madagascar's Constitutional Court has confirmed President Andry Rajoelina re-election following a controversial election a fortnight ago.
- Andry Nirina Rajoelina (born 30 May 1974) is a politician and businessman.
- He previously served in that position from 2009 to 2014 and from 2019 to 2023.
- He was the Mayor of Antananarivo from December 2007 to February 2009, and President of the High Transitional Authority of Madagascar from 21 March 2009 to 25 January 2014.

Samir Shah



DATE: 1st December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: The U.K. government has selected **Samir Shah** to serve as the **new chair of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)**.

Key Points:

- A 71-year-old media executive, Shah was born in **Aurangabad** and immigrated to the U.K. in 1960.
- With over **four decades of experience in the media industry**, Shah has held various positions, including a stint as a non-executive director at the BBC.
- Samir Shah is currently heading the **media company Juniper TV**, a British company.
- He served on the U.K. government's **Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities**, playing a key role in producing the controversial March 2021 report.

Donald Tusk

DATE: 11th December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: On December 11, former EU leader Donald Tusk returned as Poland's Prime Minister after nearly a decade, marking a significant shift from eight years of stormy national conservative rule.

Key Points:

- Tusk's leadership is expected to usher in a new-pro-European era, with promises to restore democratic standards and improve ties with European allies.
- Tusk's ascension to power followed a coalition victory in the elections two months prior.

- The coalition, consisting of left-wing to moderate conservative parties, pledged to collaborate under Tusk's leadership to address democratic concerns and strengthen ties with allies.
- The EU and other Western allies accused the party of undermining judicial independence and using taxpayer-funded media as a political tool.

Shah Rukh Khan

DATE: 15th December, 2023

WHY IN NEWS: Shah Rukh Khan has etched his name on the list of UK's list of top-50 Asian Celebrities in the World with the two action-packed thrillers, "Pathaan" and "Jawaan."

Key Points:

- The UK weekly publication, 'Eastern Eye,' recently unveiled its annual list, where Shah Rukh Khan emerged victorious, beating tough competition and securing the top spot.
- As 2023 draws to a close, **Shah Rukh Khan** is poised to achieve a remarkable feat as the **first leading man from the modern era** to deliver **three massive Bollywood blockbuster hits in a single calendar year**.
- His international appeal has been solidified with a strong presence in the **UK**, as evidenced by his top ranking in the '**Eastern Eye**' annual list.

Obituaries

NATIONAL**K G George**

DATE: 25th September, 2023

Renowned filmmaker K G George, who had been grappling with health challenges for the past five years, passed away at the age of 78 in an old age home near Kakkanad.

Key Points:

- The filmmaker had been battling health issues for the last five years, following a stroke that significantly impacted his life.
- K G George's contributions to Malayalam cinema were unparalleled.

- In 1976, K G George received the National Award for Best Feature Film for "Swapnaadanam," a testament to his exceptional storytelling abilities.
- His dedication and influence in the Malayalam film industry were recognized in 2015 when he was selected for the J C Daniel Award, the Kerala government's highest honour for outstanding contributions to Malayalam cinema.

M S Swaminathan



DATE: 29th September, 2023

Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan, fondly known as M S Swaminathan, was a legendary figure in the field of agriculture and a true humanitarian, passed away at the age of 98.

Key Points:

- Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan (7 August 1925 – 28 September 2023) was an Indian agronomist, agricultural scientist, plant geneticist, administrator and humanitarian.
- He has been called the main architect of the green revolution in India for his leadership and role in introducing and further developing high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice.
- In 1972, Swaminathan was appointed as the director-general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and a secretary to the Government of India.
- His leadership as director general of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines was instrumental in his being awarded the first World Food Prize in 1987, recognized as one of the highest honours in the field of agriculture.
- As of 2016, he had received 33 national and 32 international awards.

Anathalavattom Anandan

DATE: 6th October, 2023

Veteran Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and former legislator 'Anathalavattom Anandan' passed away at 86 after battling a prolonged illness.



Key Points:

- Veteran CPI(M) leader and former legislator Anathalavattom Anandan, played a key role in building the trade union base for the party in the state.
- Anathalavattom Anandan was born in Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram district, in 1937.
- His journey in the world of politics began in 1954 when he actively participated in an agitation advocating for higher wages for coir workers in his village.
- In 1956, Anandan became a member of the undivided Communist Party of India (CPI) and remained steadfast even after the party split in 1964.

Manohar Singh Gill



DATE: 16th October, 2023

Manohar Singh Gill the former Chief Election Commissioner passed away at the age of 86 after a short illness.

Key Points:

- Manohar Singh Gill served as a significant figure in both the Indian bureaucracy and politics.
- He became the first former CEC to join politics when he entered the Rajya Sabha as a member of the Congress party.
- In 2008, he was appointed as the Union Sports Minister, further highlighting his dedication to serving the nation in various capacities.

Bishan Singh Bedi



DATE: 25th October, 2023

Bishan Singh Bedi, one of India's most iconic cricketers, passed away at the age of 77.

Key Points:

- Bishan Singh Bedi made his Test debut against Australia in the 1969-70 series, and from that point on, he became a force to be reckoned with.
- His Test career was nothing short of exceptional, with memorable performances against top cricketing nations.
- In 1970, Bishan Singh Bedi was honored with the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to cricket.
- In 1976, Bedi was appointed captain of the Indian cricket team, succeeding Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi.
- Bedi, along with Erapalli Prasanna, BS Chandrasekhar, and S. Venkataraghavan, played a pivotal role in India's spin bowling revolution.

D B Chandregowda



DATE: 9th November, 2023

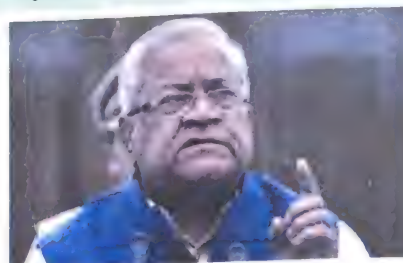
The political landscape of India mourns the loss of veteran politician and former minister **D B Chandregowda**, who passed away at the age of 87.

Key Points:

- Mr. Gowda's illustrious political career was marked by his diverse roles, spanning multiple Houses of the legislature and a journey through various political parties.

- He is most notably remembered for his selfless act of vacating his Lok Sabha seat in 1978, which paved the way for former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to make a remarkable political comeback post the Emergency.

P B Acharya



DATE: 10th November, 2023

Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya, a former governor of Nagaland and senior BJP leader, passed away in Mumbai on November 11, 2023, at the age of 92.

Key Points:

- P B Acharya was actively involved in politics from a young age.
- He joined the BJP in 1980 and held various positions in the party before becoming governor.
- He was elected the BJP President of North West Bombay District in 1987 and later in 1989 became a committee member of the Mumbai BJP.
- In 1991, he was elected a national executive member of BJP in charge of the North Eastern States of India, namely: Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland.
- Acharya was born in Udipi, Karnataka, in 1931.
- After graduation, he worked in Mumbai and was associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Lala Kedarnath Aggarwal



DATE: 14th November, 2023

Lala Kedarnath Aggarwal, the visionary entrepreneur and founder of the renowned sweets and snacks brand **Bikanervala**, breathed his last at the age of 86.

Key Points:

- His journey from a humble street vendor to the chairman of a successful business empire is a testament to his indomitable spirit and dedication.
- Hailing from Bikaner, a city with a rich culinary heritage, Aggarwal's family owned a modest sweet shop named Bikaner Namkeen Bhandar since 1905.
- His journey from the streets of old Delhi to the helm of a culinary empire is a source of inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs and a celebration of the rich tapestry of Indian entrepreneurship.

Subrata Roy



DATE: 14th November, 2023

Sahara Group's visionary founder and chairman, **Subrata Roy**, breathed his last at the age of 75 in a Mumbai hospital.

Key Points:

- Subrata Roy, born in Bihar's Araria in 1948, founded Sahara India Pariwar in 1978.
- The company's evolution over the years positioned it as a leader in entrepreneurship, according to information on Sahara's website.
- Sahara faced significant challenges related to funds, now famously known as the "**Sahara chit fund scam**."
- The legal battles, particularly involving the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Himachal Pradesh High Court, persisted for years.
- Sahara India Pariwar operated a vast number of businesses such as Aamby Valley City, Sahara Movie Studios, Air Sahara, Uttar Pradesh Wizards, Filmy, among others.
- Roy was named the tenth-most influential Indian businessmen in 2012 by India Today.

- In 2004, the Sahara group was termed by Time magazine as "the second largest employer in India after Indian Railways".
- Sahara operates through more than 5,000 establishments across India and has a workforce of around 1.2 million (field and office) under the Sahara India umbrella.

Justice Fathima Beevi



DATE: 24th November 2023

India bid farewell to its pioneering legal luminary, Justice Fathima Beevi, the country's first female Supreme Court judge, who peacefully passed away at the age of 96.

Key Points:

- Trailblazing Career from serving as a Munsiff in the Kerala Subordinate Judicial Services to assuming the roles of Subordinate Judge, Chief Judicial Magistrate, and District and Session Judge, Justice Beevi's career was marked by consistent dedication and excellence.
- Breaking Barriers In 1983, Justice Beevi achieved another historic milestone by becoming a High Court Judge, followed by her appointment as a Supreme Court Judge in 1989.
- Notably, she became the first Muslim woman to reach such heights in the Higher Judiciary.
- After her illustrious tenure on the Supreme Court, Justice Beevi continued to break barriers by becoming the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

INTERNATIONAL

Giorgio Napolitano



DATE: 25th September, 2023

Giorgio Napolitano, Italy's longest-serving president and the first in the nation's history to be reelected to the office, has passed away at the age of 98.

Key Points:

- Giorgio Napolitano, who served as the President of Italy from 2006 until 2015, was a pivotal figure in the nation's political landscape.
- He holds the distinction of being the first president in Italian history to be reelected to the office, a testament to his widespread popularity and the trust placed in him by the Italian people.
- Giorgio Napolitano was born in Naples.
- He was the longest-serving and longest-lived president in the history of the Italian Republic.

David McCallum



DATE: 26th September, 2023

British actor David McCallum who played a secret agent in the 1960s spy drama 'The Man From U.N.C.L.E.' has died at the age of 90.

Key Points:

- Mr McCallum was born in Glasgow.
- Mr McCallum also starred in films including 'The Great Escape', 'The Greatest Story Ever Told' and 'A Night To Remember'.
- The Scottish-born son of two musicians had an acting career spanning seven decades that dated back to his student days in the 1950s at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where one of his classmates was future star Joan Collins.
- He gained the attention of American audiences with his small but pivotal role as one of the prisoners of war plotting a mass breakout from a German prison camp in the 1963 World War Two classic "The Great Escape."

Terence Davies



DATE: 9th October, 2023

British filmmaker Terence Davies known for films like 'Distant Voices, Still Lives' and 'The Long Day Closes,' passed away at the age of 77 at home after a short illness.

Key Points:

- His films were characterized by their sympathetic portrayals and philosophical depth, earning him a special place in the hearts of cinemagoers worldwide.
- Terence Davies (10 November 1945 – 7 October 2023) was a British screenwriter, film director, and novelist.
- He is best known as the writer and director of autobiographical films, including Distant Voices, Still Lives (1988), The Long Day Closes (1992) and the collage film Of Time and the City (2008), as well as the literary adaptations The Neon Bible (1995), The House of Mirth (2000), The Deep Blue Sea (2011), and Sunset Song (2015).

Michael Chiarello



DATE: 9th October, 2023

Michael Chiarello, the celebrated restaurateur, celebrity chef, and former Food Network icon, passed away at 61 due to an allergic reaction.

Key Points:

- Born on January 26, 1962, in Red Bluff, Calif., Chiarello's culinary journey began in his home state.
- In 1987, he opened his first restaurant, Tra Vigne, in the picturesque Napa Valley.
- Over the years, Chiarello expanded his culinary empire, opening renowned restaurants such as Bottega, Ottimo, and Coqueta, each reflecting his distinct style and passion for creating unforgettable dining experiences.

Martti Ahtisaari

DATE: 16th October, 2023

Martti Ahtisaari, Finland's 10th president and renowned peace mediator, passed away at the age of 86.

**Key Points:**

- Martti Ahtisaari was born in Viipuri, Finland (now Vyborg, Russia).
- Martti Oiva Kalevi Ahtisaari was a Finnish politician, the tenth president of Finland (1994–2000), a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and a United Nations diplomat and mediator noted for his international peace work.
- Ahtisaari was a United Nations special envoy for Kosovo, charged with organizing the Kosovo status process negotiations, aimed at resolving a long-running dispute in Kosovo, which later declared its independence from Serbia in 2008.
- In October 2008, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for his important efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts".

- Ahtisaari served as UN undersecretary general for administration and management from 1987 to 1991 causing mixed feelings inside the organization during an internal investigation of massive fraud.

Henry Kissinger

Date: 30th November 2023

Henry Kissinger, the most powerful U.S. diplomat of the Cold War era Passed away.

Key Points:

- Kissinger was at the height of his powers during the 1970s in the middle of the Cold War and served as national security adviser and secretary of state under Republican President Richard Nixon.
- After Nixon's resignation in 1974 amid the Watergate scandal, he remained a diplomatic force as secretary of state under Nixon's successor, President Gerald Ford.
- Kissinger was the architect of the U.S. diplomatic opening with China, landmark U.S.-Soviet arms control talks, expanded ties between Israel and its Arab neighbours, and the Paris Peace Accords with North Vietnam.
- Kissinger won the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for ending U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.



States Current Affairs

BIHAR

Yusra Fatma writes maximum number of Hindi poetry books

- Yusra Fatma from Siwan district of Bihar has become the first teenager to write the maximum number of Hindi poetry books at the youngest age, for which her name has been registered in the India Books of Records 2023.
- Yusra Fatma of Tetahli village under Barharia block of Siwan district has achieved this feat by writing four poems at the age of just 15 years and 6 months.
- With this record, she has become the first girl in India to write the maximum number of Hindi poetry books in her teenage years. Yusra has been writing poems since the age of eight. At the age of 12 she wrote her first poetry book.

Bihar Business Connect Summit

- Recently, the 'Bihar Business Connect' Summit was organized by the Industries Department of Government of Bihar at ITC Maurya, New Delhi.
- In the summit, industry leaders and government officials discussed exploring investment opportunities in Bihar on one platform.
- The objective of the summit was to highlight the investment potential of Bihar with special focus on four key sectors - textiles and leather, food processing, IT/ITeS and ESDM and general manufacturing.
- These sectors present ample opportunities for investment and development in line with the state's vision of industrial development.

Shashi Bhushan won a silver medal in 1500 meters race

- Shashi Bhushan from Arrah district of Bihar won a silver medal in the 1500 meters race in the ongoing 37th National Games in Goa.

- Bihar State Sports Authority Director General and Chief Executive Officer Ravindran Sankaran said that Shashi Bhushan won the silver medal with a time of 3 minutes, 41.49 seconds.

- After 20 years, Bihar has won a medal in athletics at the National Games. This is the second silver medal for Bihar at the National Games. Earlier, Bihar had won a silver medal in women's rugby.

CHHATTISGARH

National Award for Innovation

- Himangi Haldar, a student at Bharat Mata Anglo Medium School, Bilaspur, has received the National Inspire Award in the 10th National Inspire Standard Competition held at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, New Delhi.
- Himangi Haldar has designed an anti-milk spilling device to prevent milk falling while boiling. With its help, the milk does not fall while boiling.
- Himangi has received the National Inspire Award for this innovation.

Swami Atmanand Coaching Scheme

- Chhattisgarh launched the School Education Department's innovative 'Swami Atmanand Coaching' Scheme online from his residence office for competitive examinations of engineering and medical.
- Under this scheme, free coaching will be given to class 12th students in government schools through 146 development block headquarters of the state and 150 coaching centers including four cities - Raipur, Durg, Bilaspur and Korba.
- MoU was signed between Samagra Shiksha, Chhattisgarh Text Book Corporation and Allen Career Coaching Institute Private Limited under the School Education Department for running the Swami Atmanand Coaching Scheme.

RAJASTHAN

Director of the Year-2023 Award

- Narendra Singh Rawat, Director of Rawat Educational Group, was honoured with the 'Director of the Year-2023' award by the Universal Mentors Association in the felicitation ceremony held at Hotel Clark Amer.
- In the program, Elizabeth Taylor, founder of Indase International, who came from America, honoured all the educationists with awards. Various stalwarts of the education world were honoured in this.
- Even before this, Narendra Rawat has been honoured with many international and national awards for his remarkable contribution in the field of education, the main one being the Educational Entrepreneur of the Year award from Mauritius President Prithviraj.

National Award-2023

- On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2023, President Draupadi Murmu honoured disabled Sunita Gupta and Prashant Aggarwal of Rajasthan with the National Award-2023 at a grand ceremony in New Delhi. It may be noted that on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, President Draupadi Murmu presented the National Award-2023 to 21 individuals and 9 institutions from across the country for their exemplary contribution in various fields for the empowerment of persons with disabilities in New Delhi.
- Sunita Gupta, a 70% physically disabled person from Dausa, has been awarded the National Award for Individual Excellence-2023 in the category of 'Best Disabled Person' for her excellent work in the field of art and culture.

UTTAR PRADESH

Asia's second biggest fish market in Moradabad

- Asia's second largest fish market will be built in Moradabad.
- This three-storey modern fish center, to be built on 2.125 hectares of land at a cost of Rs 50 crore, will be completely air-conditioned. In this, all the

facilities related to fish farmers and fish trade will be available under one roof.

- It is worth mentioning that Asia's first modern fish market was built in Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh. After this, preparations are being made to build a second big market in Moradabad.

Country's Second Floating CNG Station

- The union government has successfully inaugurated the second floating CNG mobile refuelling unit (MRU) station at Ravidas Ghat in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- This is the world's first mobile station. Now sailors will be able to fill CNG at Namo Ghat as well as Ravidas Ghat.
- Till now the facility was available only at NamoGhat located north of Varanasi. Now the facility has also been made at Ravidas Ghat located in the south.
- The new CNG station of Ravidas Ghat will be brought to Namo Ghat and CNG will be filled in the cascade.

Ban on Sale of Halal Marketed Products

- Halal certification on any product has been completely banned in Uttar Pradesh on November 18, 2023.
- This ban will apply to food products as well as medicines. There will be a complete ban on the manufacturing, storage, distribution and sale of food products as well as pharmaceutical products. However, there will be exemption for products sent abroad.
- It may be noted that Halal certificate has been issued on meat and its products exported abroad. Gradually, Halal certification started being stamped on all products including oil, soap, ghee.

HARYANA

Dhyan Chand Awardee Sajjan Singh Passes Away

- On November 18, 2023, Dhyan Chand Awardee wrestler Sajjan Singh Phogat, resident of Samaspur in CharkhiDadri district, died at the age of about 90.
- Dhyan Chand Awardee Sajjan Singh was born on July 28, 1933 and in 1951, He joined the army as

a constable. He was a good Kabaddi player during his school days. But after joining the army, he took up wrestling.

- Sajjan Singh represented the country in many international wrestling competitions. He represented the country at the Rome Olympics in 1960, achieving seventh place.
- Similarly, he won two silver medals in the 1962 Asian Games in Indonesia, bronze in the 1966 Asian Games and silver medal in the 1970 Commonwealth Games.

Sarabjot of Ambala won Gold Medal

- On September 28, 2023, Sarabjot Singh, a resident of village Dhin in Ambala district of Haryana, won the gold medal in shooting on the 5th day of the 19th Asian Games being held in Hangzhou, China.
- In the Asian Games, the trio of Sarabjot Singh and his two other teammates ArjunCheema and Shiv Narwal won gold in the 10m pistol men's event with a score of 1734.
- In the men's 10m air pistol event, Pham KwangHui of Vietnam won gold, Wonho Lee of Republic of Korea won silver and Vladimir Svechnikov of Uzbekistan won bronze.
- Sarabjot finished fourth with a score of 199.0, while ArjunCheema finished eighth with a score of 113.3.

JHARKHAND

Global School Award 2023

- Delhi Public School (DPS), Bokaro has been awarded the 'Global School Award 2023' in the category of providing innovation-based better educational environment and holistic development of students.
- Anjani Bhushan, vice-principal of the school, received the award on behalf of the school during

a global felicitation ceremony organized by AKS Education Awards in New Delhi.

- Delegates from 70 countries participated in the event, where educational institutions, teachers and other stakeholders were felicitated in various categories.
- Among them, only DPS Bokaro from Jharkhand got the opportunity to get the Global School Award.

Eastern India's largest Butterfly Park

- Jharkhand Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, inaugurated the largest butterfly park of Eastern India at Lord Birsa Biological Park (Birsa Zoo) of Ormanjhi under the aegis of Jharkhand Zoo Authority, Ranchi.
- This butterfly park, newly constructed at a cost of Rs 2 crore on 20 acres, has more than 80 species of butterflies.
- Zoo Authority Most of the species found in Jharkhand like Twin Coaster, Sergeant, Bush Brown, Baronet, Plain Tigers, Lemon Pansy, Common Sailor and others have been kept in the park.

MADHYA PRADESH

Gwalior included in UNESCO Creative Cities

- UNESCO has included the historical city of Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh in its Creative Cities. Gwalior has been chosen for its musical heritage.
- UNESCO has released the list of 55 Creative Cities from around the world through its official website. Two cities from India have been given place in these. Gwalior from Madhya Pradesh and Kozhikode from Kerala have been included in its list by UNESCO.
- Gwalior has been selected for 'Music' and Kozhikode for 'Literature'.

Know Your Legend

MS Swaminathan



Dr. MS Swaminathan often referred to as the “Father of Green Revolution in India,” was a prominent Indian agricultural scientist and humanitarian who has made significant contributions to the field of agriculture, food security, and sustainable development.

Swaminathan passed away on September 28, 2023, at the age of 98. His lifelong dedication to improving the lives of farmers and addressing food security issues has left an indelible mark on the world.

MS Swaminathan was born on August 7, 1925, in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu. He completed a B.Sc. in Zoology and Agricultural Sciences, Masters in Agricultural Sciences from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in 1949, with a focus on genetics and plant breeding. He completed his Ph.D. as a geneticist from Cambridge University in 1952, where he specialised in the genus *Solanum* of the potato, and later returned to India in 1954.

Career:

- MS Swaminathan joined the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) as a faculty member. He later served as the director of IARI from 1961 to 1972.
- He was the Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research from 1972 to 1979 and the principal secretary of the Indian Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation from 1979 to 1980.
- He was in charge of India's Planning Commission's agriculture and rural development from 1980 to 1982.
- In 1982, he was appointed as the Director-General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines and President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources from 1984 to 1990.
- He established the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, which aims to accelerate the use of modern science and technology for agricultural and rural development to improve the lives and livelihoods of communities.

Contributions:

- **Green Revolution-** MS Swaminathan was instrumental in his pivotal role in the Green Revolution in India during the 1960s and 1970s. As a result of the introduction of new high-yield varieties of wheat, India's wheat production skyrocketed from 12 million tonnes to 23 million tonnes in four crop seasons, reducing its reliance on grain imports.
- **National Commission on Farmers-** As the chairman of the commission, MS Swaminathan issued five reports recommending minimum crop support prices, faster and more inclusive growth, and a comprehensive national policy to address farmer suicides. He played an instrumental role in developing the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act of 2001.
- **Research-**
 - (i) **Cryogenetics:** He pioneered his research with cryogenetics studies (study of chromosomes) in potato crops.
 - (ii) **Hexaploid wheat:** He did basic research on the cytogenetics of hexaploid wheat, one of the widely cultivated cereal crops.

- (iii) C4 rice plant: During his tenure as Director General of the IRRI, research on the C4 rice plant was started for photosynthesis more efficiently.

Awards and Recognition

- **International awards:**

- (i) Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership, 1971
- (ii) Albert Einstein World Science Award, 1986
- (iii) World Food Prize, 1987
- (iv) UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize, 1994
- (v) Franklin D Roosevelt Four Freedoms Medal, 2000
- (vi) Mahatma Gandhi Prize of UNESCO, 2000

- **National awards:**

- (i) S.S. Bhatnagar Award for his contribution to biological sciences in 1961
- (ii) Padma Shri in 1967, Padma Bhushan in 1972 and Padma Vibhushan in 1989
- (iii) Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2000
- (iv) Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award, 2007

- He has received over 80 honorary doctorates from universities all over the world.



ERADICATION OF MALARIA THROUGH INNOVATIVE GENE DRIVE TECHNOLOGY

Abdoulaye Diabate, an African scientist from Burkina Faso, has been awarded the 2023 Falling Walls Prize for Science and Innovation Management for his groundbreaking research on a gene drive technology aimed at eliminating malaria and its carriers, female Anopheles mosquitoes.

Diabate's technique involves altering the genes of mosquitoes, particularly females responsible for transmitting malaria.

Through gene drive technology, genetically modified male mosquitoes are released, preventing female mosquitoes from producing viable female offspring.

This approach aims to reduce malaria transmission by depleting the female mosquito population.